JUNIO

VENUS

IN THE

BLISPOT

JUNJI ITO

VENUS IN THE BLIND SPOT

CONTENTS

Billions Alone 5

The Human Chair 45
ORIGINAL STORY BY EDOGAWA RANPO

An Unearthly Love 75
ORIGINAL STORY BY EDOGAWA RANPO

Venus in the Blind Spot 107

The Licking Woman 137

Master Umezz and Me 169

How Love Came to Professor Kirida 189
ORIGINAL STORY BY ROBERT HICHENS

The Enigma of Amigara Fault 215

The Sad Tale of the Principal Post 247

Keepsake 251

BILLIONS ALONE

SNZ—LLL SNZ—LLL

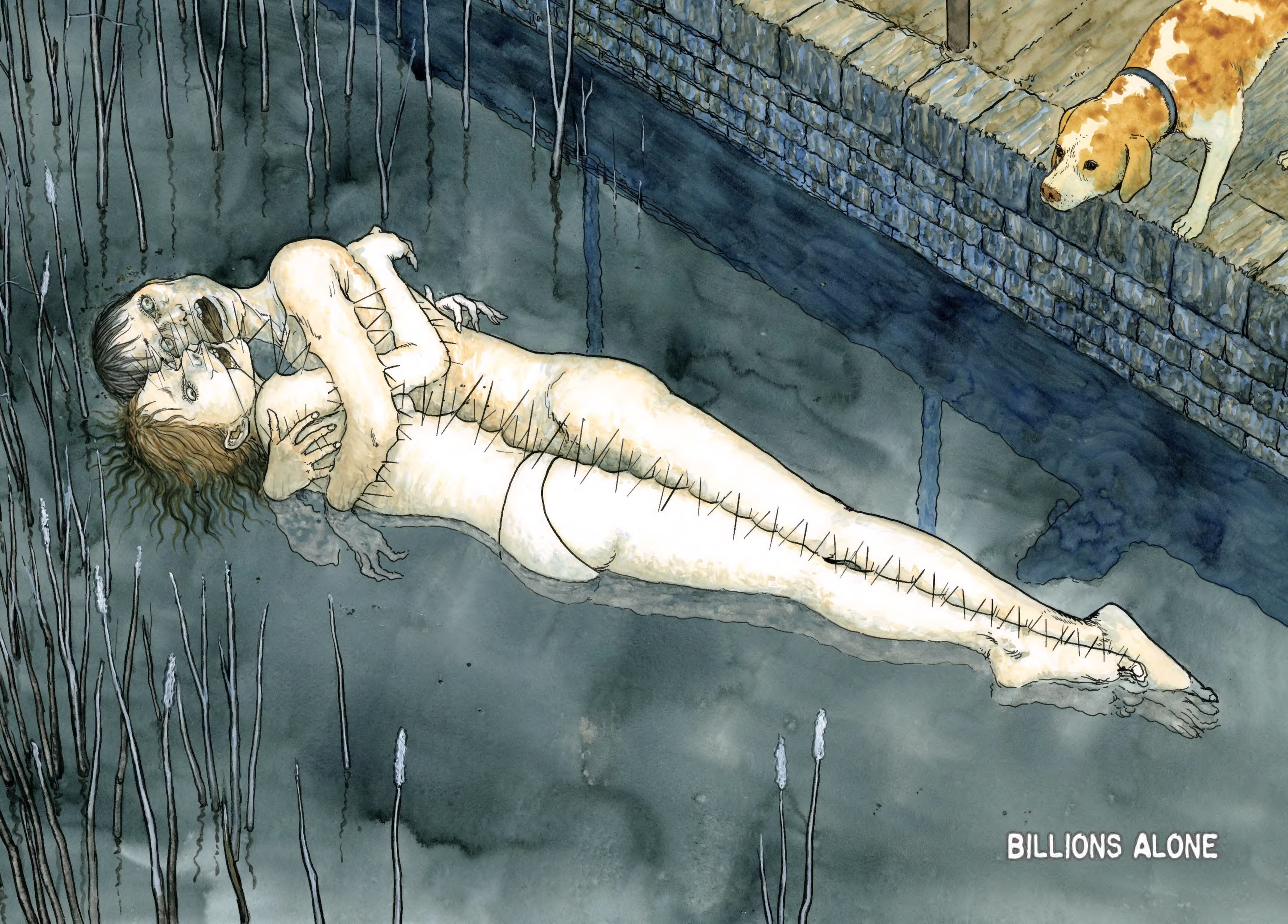
PANT

PANT PANT PANT

AAAAH!!

HM ?

HUH? WHAT IS IT, SHIRO?


BILLIONS ALONE

THE BODIES WERE FIRMLY SEWN TOGETHER WITH WHAT APPEARS TO BE FISHING LINE.

THE TWO BODIES DISCOVERED IN A POND IN THE PARK EARLY THIS MORNING...

...HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A COUPLE WHO HAD RECENTLY GONE MISSING.

MICHIO? MICHIO... ARE YOU AWAKE?

THE POLICE STRONGLY BELIEVE THIS IS THE WORK OF A DEVIANT MIND.

LEAVE ME ALONE, MOM.

SHUT UP.

IT'D BE A NICE CHANGE OF PACE.

MICHIO? HOW ABOUT YOU GO FOR A WALK SOME-TIME?

I'LL JUST LEAVE LUNCH HERE FOR YOU.

I'LL LEAVE THEM HERE WITH YOUR LUNCH.

AND ALSO, NOTICES FOR YOUR COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY AND CLASS REUNION NEXT YEAR HAVE COME ALREADY.

I SAID, LEAVE ME ALONE!

AND YOU'LL BE 20 NEXT YEAR...

BUT, MICHIO, YOU'VE BEEN LOCKED UP IN THAT ROOM FOR SEVEN YEARS NOW.

KWEEEEEN

ZUN BAM BAM BAM

HOBBY TOKYO

I WONDER WHAT NATSUKO HORIE'S DOING THESE DAYS.

THAT REMINDS ME.

CLASS REUNION, HUH...

Michio Watanabe

DUN DUN

ZUN BAM BAM

RSVP
will attend
will not attend
Name
Address

SHE WAS PROBABLY JUST TRYING TO BE NICE.

SHE WAS CUTE. AND CHEERFUL. AND POPULAR...

NATSUKO HORIE... SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO STOOD UP FOR ME IN ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR HIGH...

TOSS

...WHEN NO ONE WOULD EVEN TALK TO ME.

EVERYONE, COME TOGETHER ...

COME TOGETH- ER... COME TOGETH- ER...

KWEEEEEEN...

ZUN BAM BAM BAM

KWEEEEEEN

BILLIONS ALONE... BILLIONS ALONE...

BEING BY YOUR- SELF'S BORING ...

FM

REACH OUT FROM THE HEART...

WE'RE ALL FRIENDS... ALL FRIENDS ...

BEING BY YOUR- SELF'S BORING ...

BEING BY YOUR- SELF'S THE ONLY WAY.

HMPH. TOTALLY STUPID. HOW EXACTLY ARE WE ALL FRIENDS?

BILLIONS ALONE... BILLIONS ALONE...

REACH OUT FROM THE HEART...

LET'S ALL HOLD HANDS...

LET'S ALL COME TOGETH- ER...

WE'RE ALL FRIENDS... ALL FRIENDS ...

...WHAT IS THIS? THE RADIO?

I... MY NAME'S NATSUKO HORIE. I USED TO GO TO SCHOOL WITH MICHIO.

DING DONG

IS HE HOME?

WHO MIGHT YOU BE?

WHAT ?!

IT'S NATSUKO HORIE... WILL YOU COME TALK TO HER?

YOU HAVE A GUEST.

MICHIO !

MICHIO !

DID SHE SAY NATSUKO HORIE?

35 Knots

WHY WOULD SHE ...?

...I'LL COME DOWN.

I...

OR SHOULD I SEND HER HOME?

MICHIO? HOW ABOUT IT?

SHE'S GOTTEN SO PRETTY.

I-IT REALLY IS NATSUKO.

BA-DMP

BA-DMP

Y-YEAH.

IT'S BEEN ABOUT SEVEN YEARS, I GUESS?

MICHIO! HOW ARE YOU?

IT'S AT THE SAME TIME AS THE COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY. I'D LOVE IT IF YOU'D COME, MICHIO.

SO THE THING IS, I'M HELPING OUT WITH THE CLASS REUNION IN JANUARY.

YEAH... TOTALLY FINE.

AND I HEARD YOU DON'T GO OUT MUCH. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

EVERYONE'S WORRIED. YOU STOPPED COMING TO SCHOOL IN SEVENTH GRADE.

Rest Cafe Ron Ren

Ron

IT'LL BE FUN!

LET'S GO!

WHY DON'T YOU COME? THE GUYS'LL BE GLAD TO SEE YOU.

ACTUALLY, A BUNCH OF US ARE PLANNING THE REUNION IN A CAFE AROUND THE CORNER.

HUH? BUT...

I'M ON THE REUNION COMMIT-TEE.

REMEM-BER ME? NORIYUKI SAKAI.

IT'S BEEN FOREVER, MICHIO.

AAH...

I REMEMBER YOU. ALL OF YOU.

I'M KEISUKE KASAGI. YOU DIDN'T FORGET, RIGHT?

HEY, KEISUKE. DON'T SAY IT LIKE THAT. IT'S RUDE.

YOU GOTTA COME! YOU CAN'T STAY LOCKED UP IN YOUR HOUSE FOREVER, Y'KNOW?

BUT WE'D LOVE IT IF YOU'D COME TO THE COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY AND THE CLASS REUNION.

I THINK NATSUKO ALREADY TOLD YOU.

...

35 Knots

I'D MUCH RATHER SIT AND READ BY MYSELF THAN BE GROUND DOWN.

ONCE YOU'RE DONE WITH SCHOOL, YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH BOSSES AND ANNOYING COWORKERS AND ALL THAT.

I MEAN ...

I TOTALLY GET HOW YOU FEEL, MICHIO.

OH... RIGHT.

COOL IT, KEISUKE.

YEAH. NOT IN FRONT OF YOUR FUTURE WIFE.

C'MON, NORIYUKI, DON'T TALK LIKE THAT.

35 Knots

OKAY, I'M GONNA HEAD OUT.

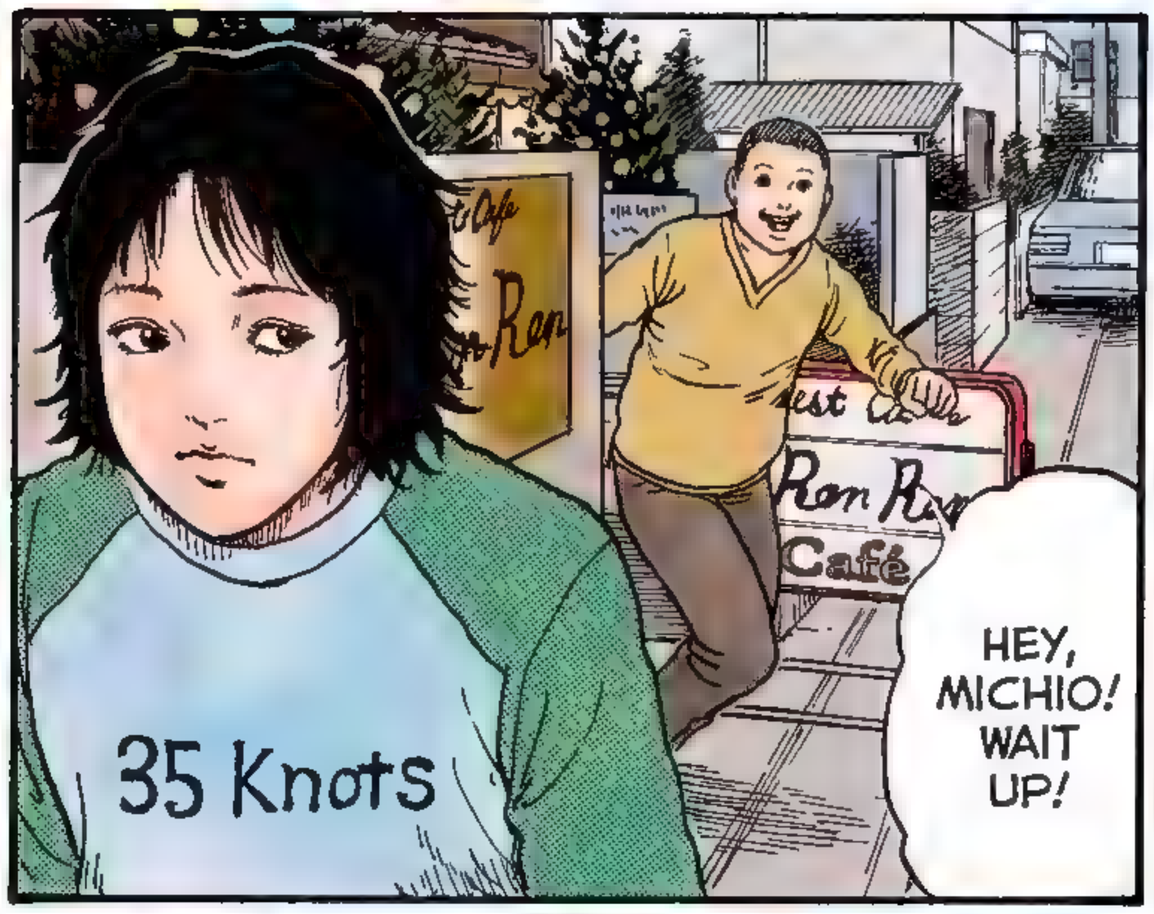
UM...

IT'S KIND OF EMBAR-RASSING.

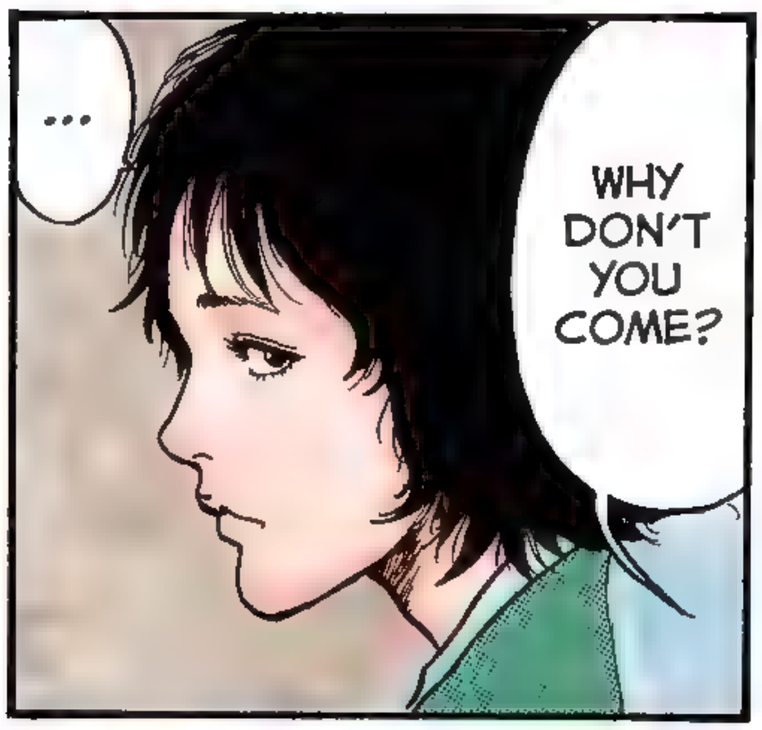
MICHIO, WE'RE ACTUALLY GETTING MARRIED NEXT YEAR.

CON-GRATS.

WOW... YOU ARE?

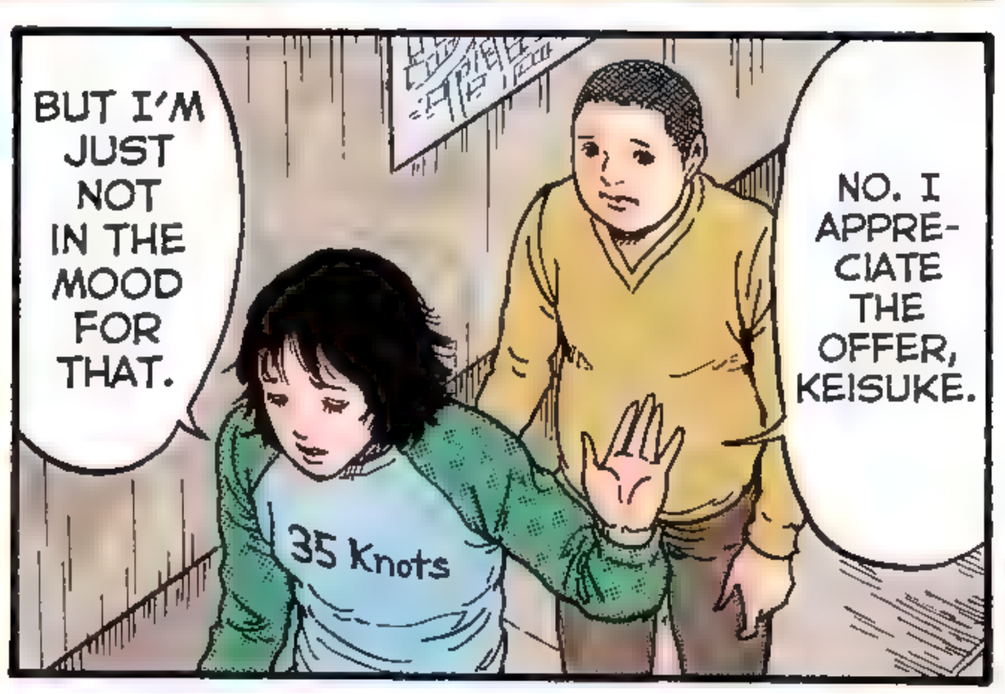

35 Knots
HEY, MICHIO! WAIT UP!

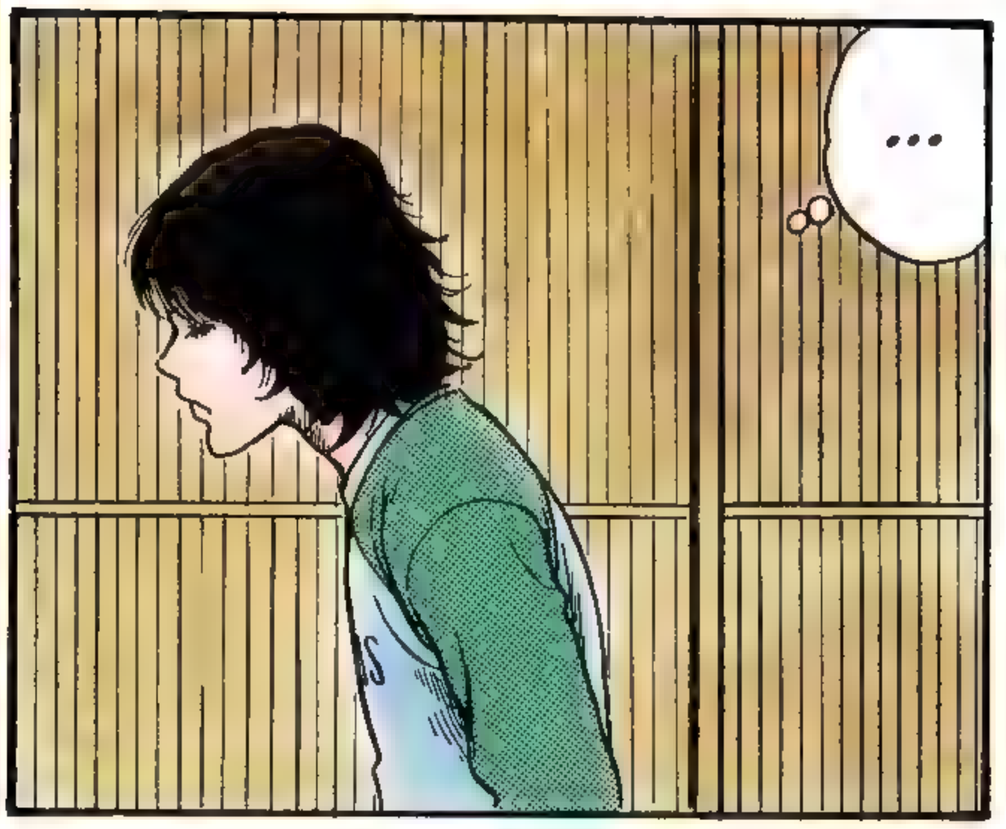
Rest Cafe
RenRen


...
WHY DON'T YOU COME?

THERE'S THIS GROUP DATE, BUT WE'RE SHORT A GUY. AND I CAN'T EXACTLY ASK NORIYUKI.
DON'T GO RUNNING OUT ON US. YOU FREE TONIGHT?

CLAMOR
CLATTER


BUT I'M JUST NOT IN THE MOOD FOR THAT.
NO. I APPRE-CIATE THE OFFER, KEISUKE.
35 Knots


...

IS IT MAYBE THOSE PEOPLE WHO WENT MISSING THE OTHER DAY?

35 knots

...

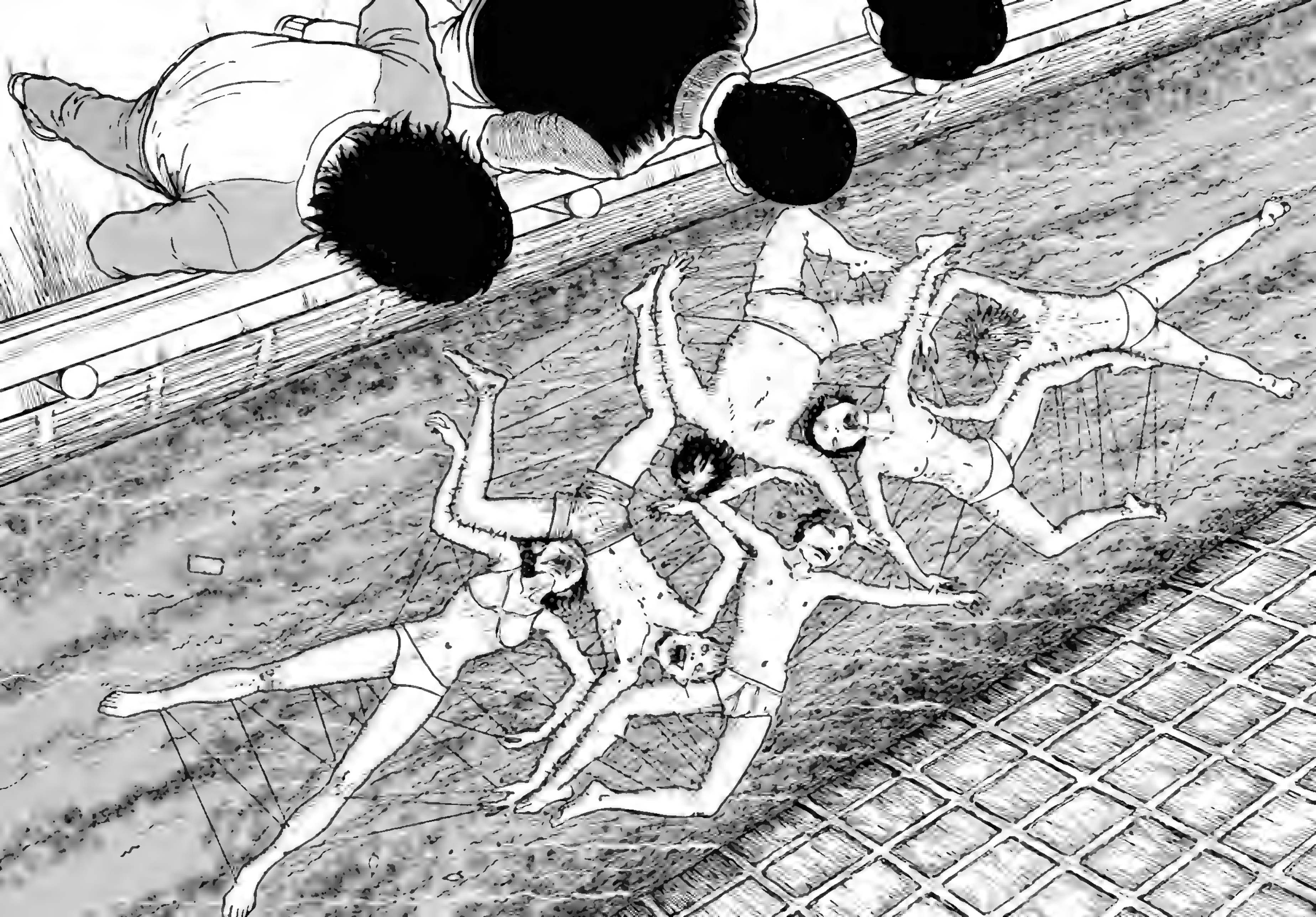
35 Knots

DIDN'T THEY FIND THE BODIES OF THAT MURDERED COUPLE LOOKING THE SAME WAY?

BUT THIS IS JUST GRUESOME. THE POLICE STILL AREN'T HERE?

AH ?!

35Kno



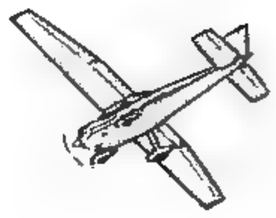
VRRRRRRRR

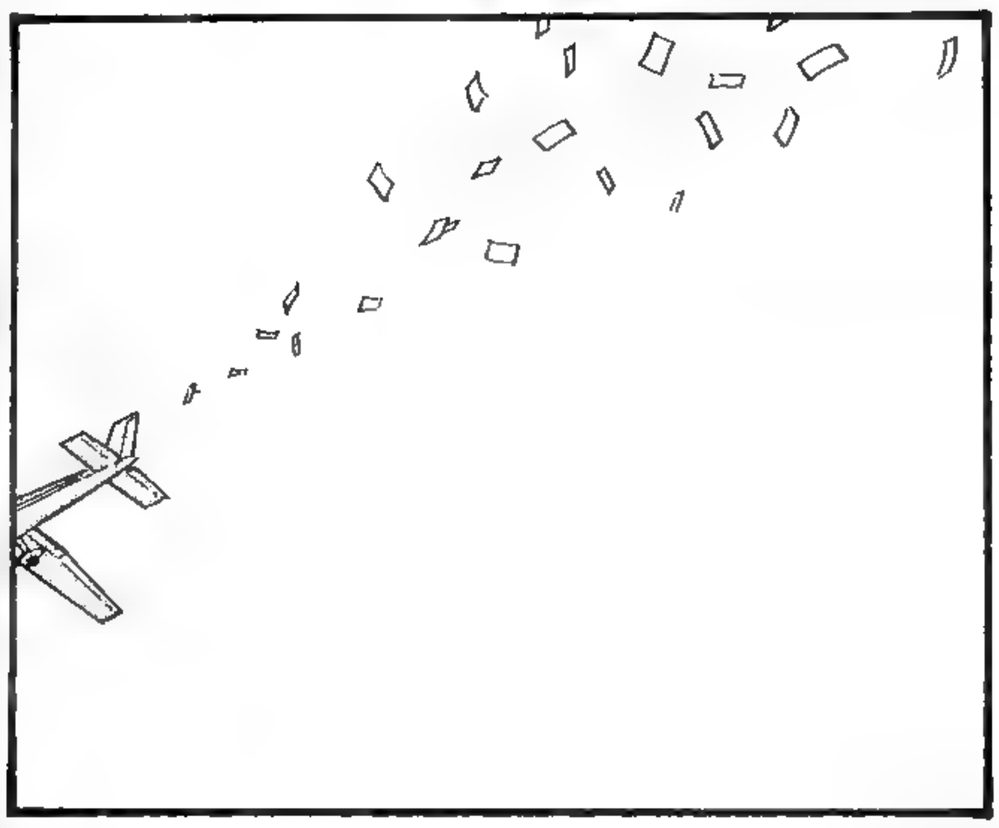
VRRRRRRR

WHO WOULD DO THIS?!

WHO ON EARTH...

VRRRRRRRRRR





PLAP
g. We're
iends!
's all hold
nds! Reach
from the heart!
Billions Alone Club
Come together!
Everyone, come
together! Being
by yourself's
boring. We're
all friends!
Let's all hold
hands! Reach
out from the heart!
Billions Alone Club

TAK TAK TAK TAK

Michio

Anz>About the murder victims sewn together

Anz>Billions Alone. Lately what I've heard

Michio>What kind of rumor?

Anz>There's a weird rumor going around.

Michio>The thing on the radio, and then

about that.

TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK TAK

Anz>There's a weird rumor going around

Michio>The thing on the radio, and the

Anz>Oh, I know about that.

Michio>By the way, do you know about

Anz>Thanks.

Michio>Good luck.

...

IT'S HORIE. YOU KNOW, THE GIRL FROM THE OTHER DAY.

MICHIO, ARE YOU AWAKE? THE PHONE'S FOR YOU.

the murder victims sewn together.

Alone. Lately what I've heard

...

I JUST WANTED TO ASK YOU SOME-THING.

MICHIO? SORRY TO CALL SO SUDDENLY.

HELLO ?

WHAT ?!

HUH ?!

HE'S BEEN MISSING SINCE THAT NIGHT. ALONG WITH EVERYONE ELSE ON THE GROUP DATE.

IT'S ABOUT KEISUKE, ACTU-ALLY.

...WAS FOUND IN THE MOUNTAINS FAR FROM WHERE HE DISAPPEARED, HIS BODY SEWN TO THE OTHERS ON THE GROUP DATE.

A FEW DAYS LATER, KEISUKE KASAGI ...

IN MANY CASES, PEOPLE SUDDENLY DISAPPEAR AFTER MEETING IN ONE PLACE AS A GROUP.

THE ENTIRE GROUP IS THEN LATER FOUND SEWN TOGETHER INTO A SINGLE CORPSE.

...ARE BEING DISCOVERED ONE AFTER ANOTHER AS PART OF "GROUP CORPSES."

MISSING PERSONS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY...

NEWS 9:00

TAK TAK TAK TAK

GIVEN THAT VICTIMS ARE BEING FOUND IN ALL REGIONS, THE PROBABILITY THAT THIS IS AN ORGANIZED CRIME...

THE FACTS EACH TIME ARE SIMILAR, SUCH AS THE TIGHT STITCHING WITH FISHING LINE.

PLACES WITH LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE DANGEROUS...

...

□ Anz>It's a rumor at best…
□ Anz>Basically, places with lots o
□ Anz>And everyone who comes togeth
□ Anz>Wherever people group, Billio
□ Anz>They'll be talking about it s
□ Michio>The media's not touching

places with lots of people
one who comes together
Wherever people group, Bil
talking about it soon enou

TAK TAK TAK TAK

Sign up for free to get started.

NAME

NATSUKO ?

OH... HELLO?

BEEP BEEP

OH. ARE YOU COMING?

ACTUALLY, IT'S ABOUT THE REUNION.

GROUP CORPSE REMAINS

IT'S MICHIO.

OH, MICHIO? HI... WHAT'S WRONG?

SO IT MIGHT BE DANGEROUS TO HAVE A REUNION.

THERE'S A RUMOR THAT WHOEVER'S BEHIND ALL THESE DISAPPEARANCES AND MURDERS LATELY IS TARGETING GROUPS.

NO WAY! REALLY?! THAT'S...

WHAT?! CANCEL?

NO, THAT'S NOT IT... IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO CANCEL IT.

I WANT YOU TO COME, TOO, MICHIO.

LOOK. I REALLY WANT TO HAVE THIS REUNION, ALSO AS A MEMORIAL FOR KEISUKE NOW THAT HE'S GONE.

I MEAN, IT'S NOT FOR SURE OR ANYTHING, BUT...

BEEP

...

YEAH. I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.

OH. RIGHT. I GUESS... MAKES SENSE.

WE'RE UP IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE YEAR HERE, BUT TONIGHT AT LEAST IS CHRISTMAS EVE!

JINGLE BELLS! JINGLE BELLS!

AND MAYBE A FEW OF YOU ARE SPENDING THE EVENING ALONE, LONELY.

HOW ARE YOU SPENDING THE NIGHT THIS YEAR? WITH YOUR LOVER, JUST THE TWO OF YOU?

OR PARTYING WITH YOUR FRIENDS?

HUH?

KWEEE EEEN EEN

BWEE BWEE WEEEE

KWEEEN

WELL, HOW ABOUT A SONG? JOHN LENNON'S "HAPPY XMAS"...

IT'S THAT WEIRD SHOW AGAIN ...

THIS AGAIN?

LET'S ALL HOLD HANDS ...

WE'RE ALL FRIENDS ... ALL FRIENDS ...

BEING BY YOUR-SELF'S BORING ...

COME TOGETH-ER... COME TOGETH-ER...

KWEEEN...

BILLIONS ALONE... BILLIONS ALONE...

LET'S ALL HOLD HANDS LIKE FRIENDS ...

EVERY-ONE, COME TOGETH-ER...

BEING BY YOUR-SELF'S BORING...

BILLIONS ALONE... BILLIONS ALONE...

THE NEXT DAY ...

AAAH! THIS IS TERRIBLE!

REACH OUT FROM THE HEART...

WE'RE ALL FRIENDS ...

THIS GROUP HAS PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED A LARGE NUMBER OF LEAFLETS VIA AIRPLANE AND REPEATEDLY HIJACKED THE AIRWAVES.

AND HERE WE SEE A PARTICU-LAR ORGA-NIZATION COMING TO THE FORE-FRONT.

THEY CALL THEM-SELVES THE "BILLIONS ALONE CLUB."

...WHO WENT MISSING ON CHRISTMAS EVE FROM VARIOUS AREAS OF THE COUNTRY WERE LATER FOUND AS GROUP CORPSES!

THE SITUATION IS EXTREMELY SERIOUS. THE MOSTLY YOUNG PEOPLE...

AT PRESENT, ALL WE CAN SAY IS THAT BILLIONS ALONE IS TARGETING GATHERINGS OF ANY KIND.

POLICE AND PUBLIC SECURITY HAVE BOTH SHOWN GREAT INTEREST AND STARTED TO INVESTIGATE, BUT THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GROUP REMAINS A MYSTERY.

IMPOSSIBLE TO THINK SO MANY COULD BE VICTIMIZED WITHOUT EVEN ONE OF THEM FIGHTING BACK.

IT'S ALSO CURIOUS THAT THE VICTIMS WERE NOT OBVIOUSLY INJURED, NOR DID THEY SHOW ANY SIGNS OF RESISTING.

...IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO CARRY OUT SUCH A LARGE-SCALE AND UNIQUE CRIME OVER SUCH A BROAD AREA WITHOUT DRAWING ANYONE'S ATTENTION?

BUT THAT SAID, NO MATTER HOW LARGE BILLIONS ALONE MIGHT BE...

BEING IN A GROUP IS DANGEROUS IN AND OF ITSELF NOW.

AT ANY RATE, WE'LL NEED TO PROCEED WITH CAUTION.

I BELIEVE BILLIONS ALONE IS IN FACT A UFO—THIS HAS TO BE THE WORK OF ALIENS, DOESN'T IT?

I FEEL AS THOUGH IT IS A POWER THAT SURPASSES HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

...AND THE MAJORITY OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE BECOMING NEW ADULTS SPOKE OUT IN FAVOR OF THE CEREMONY HAPPENING.

THE CITY WAS CONFIDENT IN THE TIGHT GUARD SET UP...

...IN OUR CITY, THE CEREMONY ENDED UP TAKING PLACE.

WHILE MANY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CALLED OFF EVENTS LIKE COMING-OF-AGE DAY...

THE CEREMONY WILL BEGIN SHORTLY, SO PLEASE MAKE YOUR WAY INSIDE.

HOW *ARE* YOU?

EEE! IT'S BEEN AGES!

YOU!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?!

WHERE'S NATSUKO?

I'M WORRIED.

AH! STOP RIGHT THERE!!

YOU'RE SUSPICIOUS. COME ON! TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE!

I-I'M NOBODY.

WHO ARE YOU?!

WHY ARE YOU RUNNING?!

I'M NOT! LET GO... I SAID LET GO!

HE MIGHT BE WITH BILLIONS ALONE!

COME ON!

WHY WOULD A NEW ADULT BE HIDING BEHIND A TREE?!

L-LET GO!! I'M A NEW ADULT!

NATSUKO!

OH!

WHAT'S GOING ON, MICHIO?

WHY ARE YOU STANDING OUT HERE INSTEAD OF GOING INSIDE?

WHAT? SO YOU REALLY *ARE* A NEW ADULT?

YES. HE WAS MY CLASSMATE IN JUNIOR HIGH.

DO YOU KNOW THIS MAN?

WELL THEN, GO INSIDE. THE CEREMONY'S STARTING.

IS THAT SO?

HE'S DEFINITELY NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

HE'S NOT GOOD WITH CROWDS. HE WAS TRYING TO DECIDE WHETHER HE SHOULD GO OR NOT.

OFFICER, HE'S A VERY SHY PERSON.

THE YEAR'S JUST STARTED AND I'M ALREADY SHOWING UP LATE. IT TOOK A WHILE TO GET DRESSED.

I'M NOT ONE TO TALK, EITHER.

THANKS, NATSUKO. YOU REALLY SAVED ME.

AONO CITY COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY

S-SURE.

OKAY, LET'S GO, MICHIO.

CONGRATULATIONS

OH?!

WHERE'D EVERYONE GO?!

W-WHAT? THERE'S NO ONE HERE?

NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!

A GROUP DISAP-PEARANCE ?!

I-IT CAN'T BE...

AND THEN, A FEW DAYS LATER ...

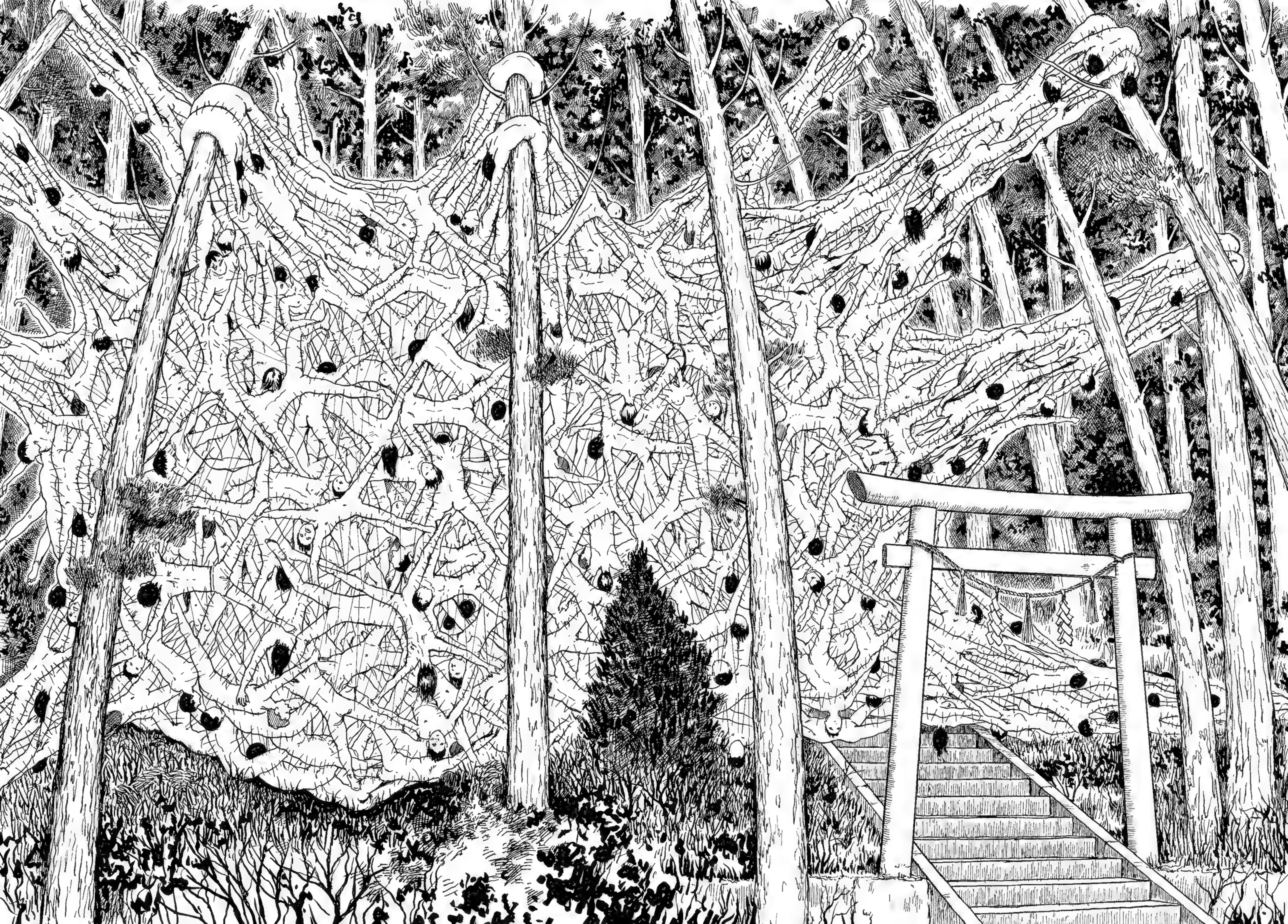
IT SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POS-SIBLE.

NOOOOO!!

NORIYUKI!!!!!!! NORIYUKI!!!!!! WHERE ARE YOUUUUU?!

IN A MERE INSTANT, THE 500 AND SOME PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE CEREMONY HAD VANISHED.

N-NATSUKO... HANG ON...



...AND MOTHERS WOULD SHUT THEIR WEEPING CHILDREN IN A DIFFERENT ROOM.

MARRIED COUPLES LOCKED THEM-SELVES UP IN SEPARATE ROOMS ...

...AND ENDED UP HOLED UP IN ROOMS ALL BY THEMSELVES.

AFTER THAT, PEOPLE STARTED AVOIDING OTHER PEOPLE...

OH... HELLO ?

...

NA-TSUKO ?

I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU'D CALMED DOWN A BIT...

UM. EVERYTHING IN JAPAN'S A MESS RIGHT NOW, AND I DON'T KNOW WHEN THE PHONES'LL STOP WORKING.

I'M A LITTLE BETTER. BUT I CAN'T MOTIVATE MYSELF TO DO ANYTHING.

AND NORIYUKI'S GONE...

SO I THOUGHT I'D CALL NOW WHILE I CAN...

THANKS.

Album

...IT WOULDN'T MATTER WHETHER HE WAS DEAD OR ALIVE.

AND IF THE PHONES AND EMAIL STOP WORKING ...

EVEN IF HE WERE STILL ALIVE, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SEE HIM.

...BUT IT'S WEIRD.

I'LL COME SEE YOU.

I THINK IT SHOULD BE OKAY IF IT'S FOR JUST A SHORT TIME.

N-NATSUKO. IF IT'S OKAY WITH YOU...

LOCKED UP IN A ROOM BY MYSELF, I'M SO LONELY... I WANT TO DIE.

BUT I... I'M LONELY.

IF I COULD SEE YOU, MICHIO... I'D LIKE THAT.

REALLY? JUST YOU SAYING THAT MAKES ME HAPPY.

OH? WELL, BE CAREFUL ...

I'M GOING OUT FOR A BIT.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

DON'T COME IN.

MOM...

MOM, YOU AWAKE?

...I WOULDN'T HAVE MINDED BECOMING PART OF A GROUP CORPSE IF IT WAS WITH HER.

TO BE HONEST...

I JUST WANTED TO SEE NATSUKO HORIE.

VRRRRRRRRR

THE CITY WAS SILENT.

EVERYONE, COME TOGETHER...

VRRRR

COME TOGETHER... COME TOGETHER...

VRRRR

...

BEING BY YOUR-SELF'S BORING...

LET'S ALL HOLD HANDS...

VRRRR

WHOOOAR

WHRRR

THERE'S NO WAY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD JUST STAND BY AND WATCH!

RIGHT... NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!

THE GOV-ERNMENT'S STARTING TO TAKE REAL ACTION!

IT'S THE MILITARY! THE MILITARY'S SCRAMBLING AGAINST BILLIONS ALONE!

ONE MORE THING...

AND THEN... WHEN I SEE HER...

I HAVE TO TELL HER!

IT'S OKAY NOW!

HORIE

HAH!

HAH!

"I LIKE YOU"!

I'VE GOT ONE MORE THING TO TELL HER!

COME TOGETH-ER...

COME TOGETH-ER...

NATSUKO!

ZUKU

NATSUKO, IT'S ME!

NATSU-KO!

...BORING...

SNAP

BEING BY YOUR-SELF'S...

COME TOGETH-ER...

EVERY-ONE...

ALL TOGETH-ER...

LILY...

MOM ...

DAD...

BILLIONS ALONE...!!

BILLIONS ALONE...

NATSU-KO...

N—

WHRRRRRR

THE HUMAN CHAIR

ORIGINAL STORY BY EDOGAWA RANPO

家具
工房
揺籃堂

*Furniture Workshop Yorando

KLATTER-

A FURNITURE WORK-SHOP...

...

I WAS HOPING TO GET YOU TO MAKE A CHAIR.

YES. *UM.*

DID YOU WANT TO PLACE AN ORDER?

GOOD AFTER-NOON.

WILL YOU BE USING IT FOR WORK?

SOMETHING SOFT, COMFORT-ABLE, STURDY.

YES, WELL...

A CHAIR? WHAT KIND?

AND IT REMINDED ME THAT MY CHAIR'S NOT REALLY SO COMFORTABLE.

NO, I JUST HAPPENED TO BE ON A BIT OF A HOLIDAY... I CAUGHT SIGHT OF YOUR SIGN.

家具工房 猛監

OH, YES. I WORK AS A WRITER IN TOKYO.

AND YOU CAME ALL THIS WAY FOR A CHAIR?

IF YOU CHOOSE THE WRONG ONE, IT CAN LEAD TO HEALTH PROBLEMS.

A CHAIR HAS TO SUPPORT A BODY FOR A LONG TIME.

I SEE. A GOOD CHAIR REALLY IS KEY, *HM?*

YES. I KNOW OF A CASE LIKE THAT FROM A WHILE BACK.

GOOD-NESS. THEIR LIFE?

...A CHAIR CAN CHANGE A PERSON'S LIFE.

IN THE MOST EXTREME CASE...

...THERE'S SOME-THING I WANT TO SHOW YOU.

BUT FIRST...

IF YOU DON'T KNOW IT, MISS, I'D BE GLAD TO TELL YOU THIS MYSTERIOUS STORY.

IN THE TAISHO ERA, A CHAIR DID INDEED ALTER A CERTAIN PERSON'S DESTINY.

THIS WAY.

IT'S QUITE PRECIOUS, SO I KEEP IT IN THE BACK.

THIS OLD ARMCHAIR IS CONNECTED TO THE STORY I MENTIONED.

SHE'S BEEN COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN NOWADAYS. SHE WAS QUITE A POPULAR AUTHOR IN THE TAISHO DAYS.

WELL, IT'S NO WONDER YOU HAVEN'T.

NO...

MISS, HAVE YOU HEARD OF YOSHIKO TOGAWA?

AND THEN ONE DAY, A CURIOUS MANUSCRIPT WAS DELIVERED TO HER DOOR.

Mrs. Yoshiko Togawa

NEARLY EVERY DAY, UNKNOWN ADMIRERS WOULD SEND HER LETTERS AND MANU-SCRIPTS.

SHE WAS THE WIFE OF A SECRETARY AT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND AN ACCOMPLISHED WRITER.

VIVID AND EARNEST... THE PAGES SPELLED OUT A MYSTERIOUS MONOLOGUE SOMEHOW NOT OF THIS WORLD.

THIS MANUSCRIPT HAD NO TITLE, NO AUTHOR NAME, AND IT BEGAN WITH THE ADDRESS "MADAME." ALMOST AS THOUGH SPEAKING TO HER DIRECTLY...

THE CHAIR WAS FIRST PLACED IN A HOTEL BEFORE EVENTUALLY BEING SOLD TO A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL...

...AND THE CRAFTSMAN ENDED UP FALLING IN LOVE WITH THIS OFFICIAL'S WIFE.

HE HID HIMSELF INSIDE OF A CHAIR HE HAD BUILT AND GAVE HIMSELF OVER TO THE PLEASURES OF HIS PERVERSION.

THE STORY WAS OF AN UGLY FURNITURE MAKER WHO WAS CARRIED AWAY BY A VIOLENT PASSION.

SHE HEAVED A SIGH OF RELIEF.

Toshima-ku, Ikebukuro 3-chome 2

Mrs. Yoshiko Togawa

BUT A LETTER ARRIVED SOON AFTER TO INFORM HER THAT THE MANUSCRIPT WAS FICTION.

YOSHIKO TOGAWA ASSUMED IT WAS A LOVE LETTER TO HER OWN SELF, AND A SHIVER RAN UP HER SPINE.

AAH, HOW DISTURB-ING.

THE MANUSCRIPT TOOK THE FORM OF A LETTER FROM THE CRAFTSMAN CONFESSING HIS LOVE TO HER.

HOWEVER, THIS WAS NOTHING MORE THAN THE START OF...

...SOMETHING TRULY TERRIFYING.

EVERYONE LOVED YOUR "BLOSSOM IN THE MOONLIGHT" IN LAST MONTH'S EDITION, TOO. IT WAS SECOND IN THE READER SURVEY.

GOODNESS. SECOND!

OH MY, I DOUBT THAT, MR. KAWAGUCHI.

YOU'RE EVEN MORE ACTIVE THAN YOUR HUSBAND, AND HE'S A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL.

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR THE MANUSCRIPT. YOU HAVE REALLY BROUGHT THE READERS TO OUR MAGAZINE *BITTER MEDICINE*, MRS. TOGAWA!

I WAS SURPRISED AS WELL. A NO-NAME NEWBIE JUMPING STRAIGHT TO NUMBER ONE!

INDEED. THE VERY MANUSCRIPT THAT WAS SENT TO YOU.

"THE HUMAN CHAIR"... THE STORY I SHOWED YOU?

"THE HUMAN CHAIR"?!

NO. NUMBER ONE WAS "THE HUMAN CHAIR."

WHO WAS NUMBER ONE THEN? MR. AOYAMA, I SUPPOSE.

THE AUTHOR IS JUST AWFUL, HOWEVER.

YES. THAT STORY ALSO STUNNED ME.

SUCH A BIZARRE IDEA, A MAN CLIMBING INTO A CHAIR.

BUT IT CERTAINLY IS A DISTINCTIVE WORK.

...IT APPEARS TO BE WRONG.

OH, THAT REMINDS ME! THE AUTHOR'S ADDRESS ON THAT LETTER...

UNTIL THE LETTER CAME, I THOUGHT THERE REALLY WAS SOMEONE INSIDE MY CHAIR.

I ACTUALLY WORK IN AN ARMCHAIR JUST LIKE THE ONE IN THE STORY.

NO, NOT A WORD.

HAVE YOU HEARD FROM THE AUTHOR SINCE, MRS. TOGAWA?

THERE'S NO HOUSE AT THAT ADDRESS. SO WE STILL HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THE AUTHOR. WE'RE AT WIT'S END.

LETTERS AND TELEGRAMS KEPT BEING SENT BACK, SO I WENT THERE MYSELF.

GOOD-NESS...

I WONDER WHAT COULD HAVE HAP-PENED.

WELCOME HOME, MADAME.

KACHAK

WHAT COULD THAT MEAN?

AND THEY DON'T KNOW HIS ADDRESS.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT NEW WRITER TOOK NUMBER ONE... HOW DREADFUL.

FWUMP

AAH, I'M SO TIRED...

IT COULDN'T BE.

IT...

AH!

BUT WHERE DID YOU BUY THAT ARMCHAIR?

DARLING, I KNOW THIS IS A SUDDEN QUESTION.

OH... NO, IT'S NOTHING.

YOSHIKO? WHY DO YOU ASK?

...AT AN AUCTION ?

WHAT? A FURNITURE SHOP...

HM? THIS? I GOT IT AT AN AUCTION AT A FURNITURE SHOP IN THE CITY OF Y.

YES, JUST A COINCI-DENCE.

JUST AN UNPLEAS-ANT COIN-CIDENCE.

THAT NIGHT.

KRIK KRIK KRIK

BUT IT'S JUST A COINCI-DENCE.

THAT MANUSCRIPT ALSO SAID THAT THE OFFICIAL BOUGHT THE CHAIR AT AN AUCTION AT A Y FURNITURE SHOP.

...AT THIS HOUR?

KRIK

PLAP PLAP

WHO COULD THAT BE...

KRIK KRIK PLAP PLAP

KRIK PLAP PLAP

KRIK PLAP PLAP

KRIK KRIK

...MM.

KRIK KRIK

IT'S NOT. THE SERVANTS DON'T WALK LIKE THAT.

JUST A SERVANT ?

MWAH, MYAH... WHAT?

SOMEONE'S WALKING AROUND THE HOUSE.

DARLING... DARLING, WAKE UP.

THAT... SOUNDED LIKE SOMEONE GOING INTO STUDY IN THE WEST WING.

PAD PAD PAD PAD PAD PAD PAD PAD

SLAM

KREEEE

KRIK KRIK KRIK

A BUR-GLAR ?

...A PERSON INSIDE THE CHAIR...

WHAT?

DARLING, PLEASE CHECK THE CHAIR. IT MIGHT BE... THERE MIGHT BE...

WHAT'S WRONG, YOSHIKO?

IT CAN'T BE.

IT CAN'T BE...

WATCH. I'LL CATCH HIM.

RUBBISH. THAT'S A BURGLAR DIGGING AROUND IN THE STUDY.

...I JUST FEEL LIKE THE MAN REALLY IS INSIDE THAT CHAIR.

AND NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, HE CLIMBS OUT...

REMEMBER? THAT MANUSCRIPT I GOT? "THE HUMAN CHAIR"... I THOUGHT IT WAS FICTION, BUT...

KREEEB

KACHAK

KRIK KRIK KRIK

HEY!!

WHO'S IN HERE?!

SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SQUIRM

AAAAH
!!

SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SQUIRM

IT'S WRITHING !!

THE CHAIR... THE CHAIR'S MOVING!

YOSHIKO! WHAT'S WRONG?!

IT WAS... IT WAS REALLY WRITHING! A PERSON HAS CLIMBED INSIDE THE CHAIR!

IT IS *NOT* MOVING!

MASTER! MADAME!

WHAT ?!

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

PLEASE LOOK INSIDE THE CHAIR!

HURRY!

W- WHAT ...?

WATCH !

IF YOU'RE SO WORRIED, I'LL JUST DO THIS.

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS! THIS CHAIR WAS EXPENSIVE!

IT'S CLEVERLY HIDDEN! PEEL OFF THE LEATHER AND LOOK!

MADAME, I CAN'T FIND ANYTHING RESEMBLING AN ENTRANCE ANYWHERE.

WHAP

WHAP

WHAP

WHAP

WHAP

WHAP

...

NO MATTER HOW I BEAT IT, IT DOESN'T SO MUCH AS TWITCH. THERE'S NO ONE INSIDE.

SO, YOSHI-KO?

HAAH.

THANK YOU.

MADAME, HERE IS THIS MORNING'S POST.

HAVE A SAFE TRIP, SIR.

A FEW DAYS LATER.

Toshima-ku, Ikebukuro 3-chome Mrs. Yoshiko Togawa

THIS HAND-WRITING ...

Toshima-ku, Ikebukuro 3-chome Mrs. Yoshiko Togawa

AH!

Additionally, can you begin to understand, madame, how great was my suffering on a certain night when I received such poor treatment?

You haven't been sitting in my chair recently. I wonder if you have any idea how terribly sad this makes me.

RRRIP

Madame, You haven't been sitting in my chair recently. I wonder

Toshima-

I know that your work as a writer is more important to you than your husband. And also that the chair that I am is indispensible to your creation...

Madame, your husband is a terrible man. No, I say this not because he beat me. But rather, your husband is jealous of your work.

I eagerly await the day when I can become one with you forever...

Madame, you are such that you simply cannot live without me. And I too cannot live without you.

Otherwise, you cannot make full use of your true creative power. I know this as well.

You must sink down deep into me and be held gently by my body.

WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?!

RIDICULOUS. THE IDEA THAT I CAN'T WRITE WITHOUT THAT CHAIR...

END

WELCOME HOME, SIR.

DIDN'T WE AGREE YOU WOULD WRITE YOUR NOVELS IN THE STUDY DURING THE DAY WHEN I'M NOT HOME?

I'M SORRY. I'M STUCK ON THE NEXT INSTALLMENT OF MY SERIES. I JUST...

AHH ...

YOSHIKO! WHY DIDN'T YOU COME OUT TO GREET ME?!

I REALLY AM SORRY.

OH, PLEASE...

YOU CAN STOP RIGHT NOW WITH BLAMING THE CHAIR IF YOU'RE UNABLE TO WRITE!

STOP MAKING EXCUSES ABOUT HOW THE CHAIR IS CREEPY.

I WAS WRONG. I'M JUST A LITTLE UPSET BECAUSE WRITING'S BEEN A STRUGGLE LATELY.

PLEASE ...

DARLING?

THUD

AH! YOU'RE BLEEDING!

DARLING!

SHF SHF

SHF

THE HIGH-RANKING OFFICIAL MR. TOGAWA'S BEEN MURDERED.

A MURDER, APPARENTLY.

WHAT ON EARTH'S HAPPENED?

CHATTER CHATTER CHATTER

AAAAAAAAH!!

HE PLUNGED A KNIFE THROUGH THE CHAIR AND STABBED MY HUSBAND.

THERE'S A MAN INSIDE THAT CHAIR!

OFFICER! IT'S THE CHAIR! PLEASE EXAMINE THE CHAIR!

A MAN IN THE CHAIR?

WHAT?

WELL, LET'S TAKE A LOOK INSIDE AT ANY RATE.

WHAT ?!

THERE IS INDEED A CUT IN THE CHAIR.

GASP

RIP RIP

SHHH

EEEAAAAH!

...TO THE WRITER YOSHIKO TOGAWA AFTER THAT?

SO THEN... WHAT HAPPENED ...

...WERE SIGNS OF A PERSON LIVING THERE.

AND INDEED, INSIDE THE CHAIR ...

HOWEVER, HER STRUGGLE TO WRITE ONLY GREW WORSE, UNTIL YOU COULD SAY SHE DEVELOPED A MENTAL ILLNESS.

THE POLICE ACCEPTED HER STATEMENT, BUT THE MEDIA SUSPECTED SHE HAD KILLED HER HUSBAND.

THAT IS TO SAY, THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE IN THE HUMAN CHAIR.

...HAVE BEEN AN ESSENTIAL PART OF HER CREATIVE PROCESS.

IN THE END... THAT CHAIR MIGHT REALLY...

EVENTU-ALLY, YOSHIKO TOGAWA WENT MISSING.

THEY SAY SHE WAS NEVER SEEN AGAIN AFTER THAT.

THIS? NO, THIS IS NOT THAT CHAIR.

THAT CHAIR WAS SEIZED BY THE POLICE, AND ITS WHEREABOUTS ARE NOW UNKNOWN.

SO THEN... THIS CHAIR CAN'T POSSIBLY BE...

...THE SAME ONE.

AH?!

RRK

TUG

PLEASE TAKE A LOOK.

BUT THIS CHAIR *IS* RELATED TO THIS STORY.

HAAH.

RRK RRK RRK

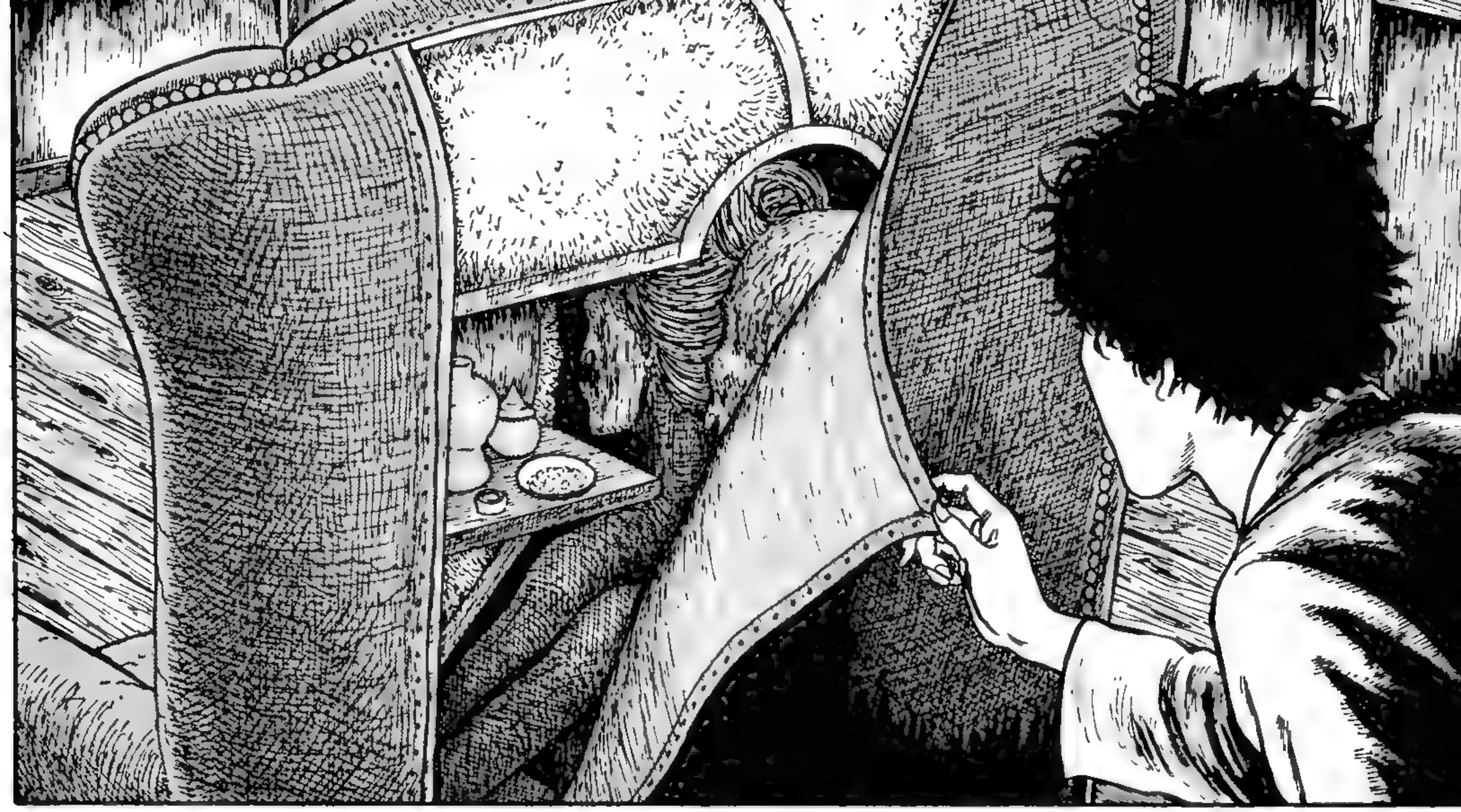
RRK TUG RRK RRK RRK

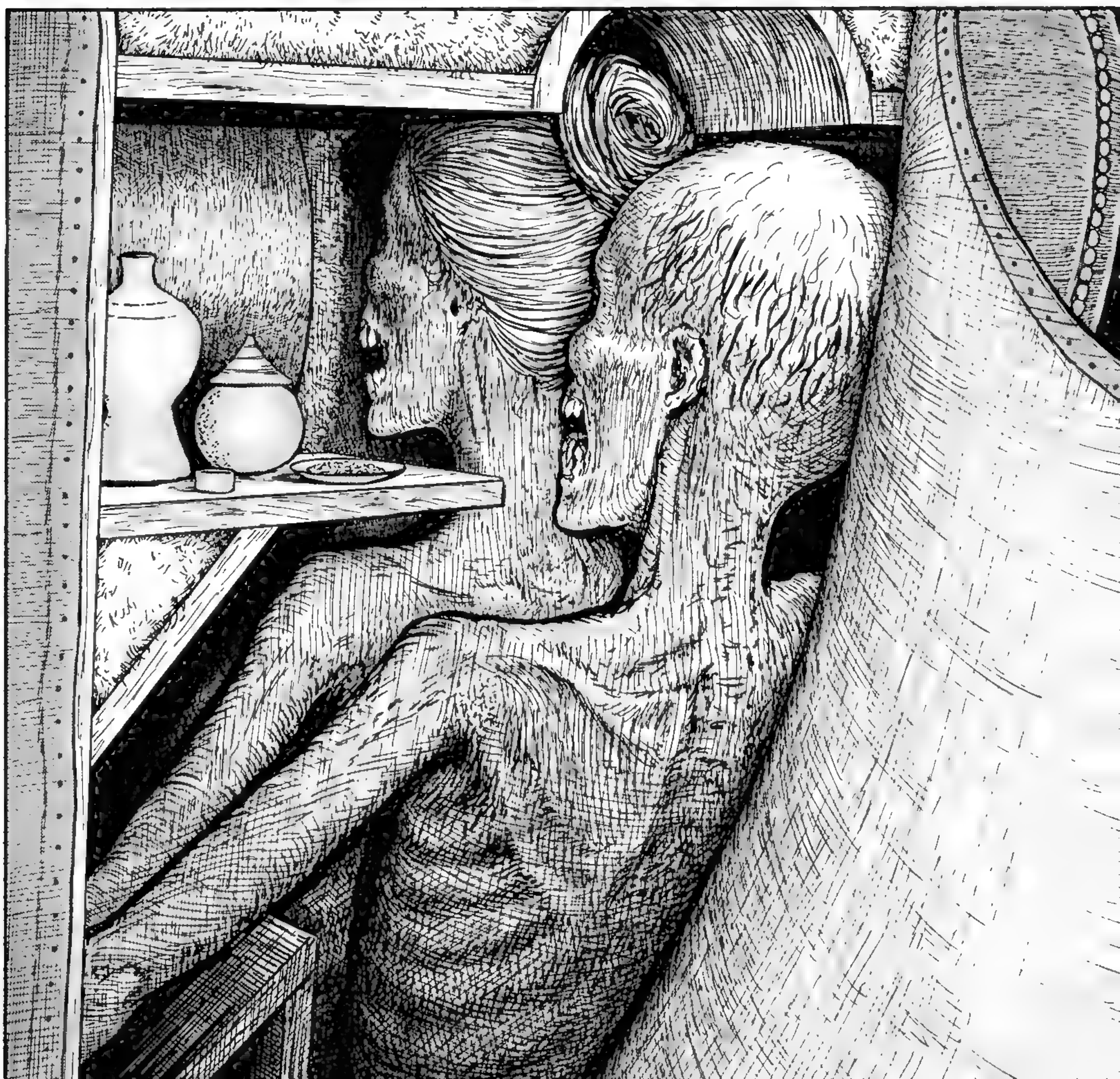
I ONLY SHOW THIS...

...TO PEOPLE I REALLY LIKE.

PLEASE HAVE A LOOK.

NOW.





AAAAAH!

AFTER YOSHIKO'S DISAPPEARANCE, THEY LIVED AS A COUPLE IN THIS CHAIR UNTIL THE NATURAL END OF HER DAYS. I SUPPOSE IT WAS A STRANGE, SOMEWHAT BIZARRE MARRIED LIFE.

THE MAN'S FEELINGS WERE RECIP-ROCATED. AND SHE GAINED ETERNAL COMFORT.

THIS IS THE FATE OF YOSHIKO TOGAWA... AND THE MAN WHO LOVED HER SO DEEPLY.

NO WAY.

...

WOULD YOU BELIEVE ME IF I SAID THAT *I* AM ONE OF THOSE DESCENDANTS?

MISS ...

THIS CHAIR HAS BEEN CAREFULLY PRESERVED BY THE GENERATIONS OF THEIR DESCENDANTS.

OF COURSE, DURING THAT TIME, THEY WERE ALSO BLESSED WITH CHILDREN.

I LOVE YOUR WORK. I'VE READ IT ALL.

I REALIZED IT THE MOMENT WE MET.

WHAT ?!

...YOU'RE THE WRITER YUZUHO HAYAMA, AREN'T YOU?

EXCUSE ME FOR ASKING, BUT...

YES... I GUARAN-TEE IT.

I'LL MAKE A CHAIR FOR YOU. YOU'LL DEFINITELY BE ABLE TO PULL OUT OF IT.

IS IT TRUE YOU HAVE WRITER'S BLOCK?

BUT I HEARD YOU'VE BEEN HAVING SOME TROUBLE LATELY.

家具工房 竹内

THAT'S FINE... I...

N-NO...

PLEASE EXCUSE ME!

THE WRITER YOSHIKO TOGAWA REALLY EXISTED, AND THERE WERE ARTICLES ABOUT THE HUMAN CHAIR INCIDENT.

Yoshiko Togawa

Human Chair Murder

BUT I DID LOOK IT UP AND FOUND THAT THE FACTS CHECKED OUT ON THE STORY THE CRAFTSMAN TOLD ME.

...IT ALL A DREAM ...?

WAS ...

I'M TIRED OF RUNNING AND HIDING FROM MY EDITOR.

I CAN'T WRITE AT ALL.

IF WE COULD JUST GET YOUR SIGNA-TURE.

IT'S HEAVY, SO WE'LL BRING IT RIGHT INSIDE!

WE'VE GOT A DELIVERY !

HELLO !

MAYBE... THIS IS REALLY THE END.

DING DONG

WHAT ?

TH-THIS CHAIR! I DIDN'T ORDER THIS CHAIR!

PLEASE DON'T! I DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS!

SQUIRM

SQUIRM

SQUIRM

SQUIRM

AN UNEARTHLY LOVE

ORIGINAL STORY BY EDOGAWA RANPO

Edogawa Ranpo

1894—1965. Born in Nabari, Mie Prefecture, Japan he went on to graduate from the economics department of Waseda University. His real name was Taro Hirai. He took his pen name from the 19th century American writer Edgar Allan Poe. He published "The Two-Sen Copper Coin" in *Shin Seinen* in 1923, and created the foundations for the mystery genre in Japan. His most famous works include "The Human Chair," *Beast in the Shadows*, *The Golden Mask*, and the essay collection *The Phantom Castle*.

IN THIS WORLD, SOME ARE REMOVED FROM THE PATH OF THE AVERAGE MAN, POSSESSED, UNABLE TO KEEP THEIR HEADS ABOVE WATER...

...ALL THE WHILE SUFFERING FROM THE AWARENESS OF THEIR SIN.

WAS IT ALL NOTHING BUT THE MARK OF THAT EPHEMERAL ANGUISH?

...THE FACT THAT HE STROVE TO LOVE ME UNCONDITIONALLY...

THE FACT THAT KADONO TOOK ME TO WIFE...

THEY WERE A FAMILY OF SOME RENOWN, SO I KNEW HIS FACE AT LEAST.

BUT I'D HEARD KADONO WAS RUMORED TO BE QUITE MOODY AND A HATER OF WOMEN.

I DO WONDER WHAT TWIST OF FATE LED TO ME MARRYING INTO THE KADONO HOUSE.

FWP

GLANCE

HE RATHER SEEMS MORE LIKE HE'D HAVE A BEAUTIFUL LOVER SECRETED AWAY...

SUCH A HANDSOME MAN AS THIS HATES WOMEN? HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY.

IN FACT, HE WAS KINDER THAN THE AVERAGE MAN AND HE TREATED ME RATHER GENTLY.

THEY SAY THAT IT IS WORSE TO WORRY THAN TO ACT. KADONO WAS NOT SO STRANGE A MAN AS RUMOR HAD IT.

DARLING KYOKO...

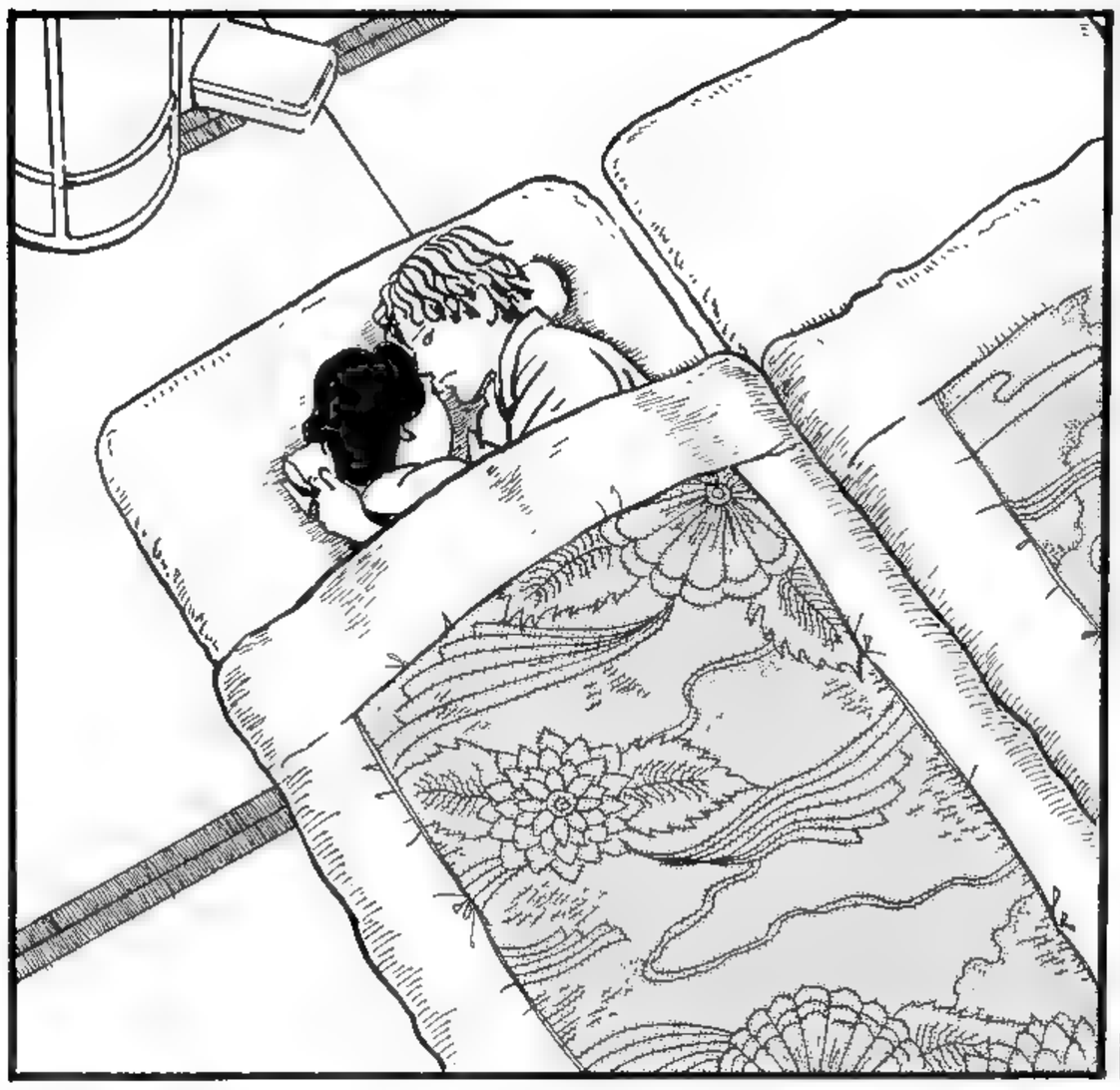
KYOKO ...

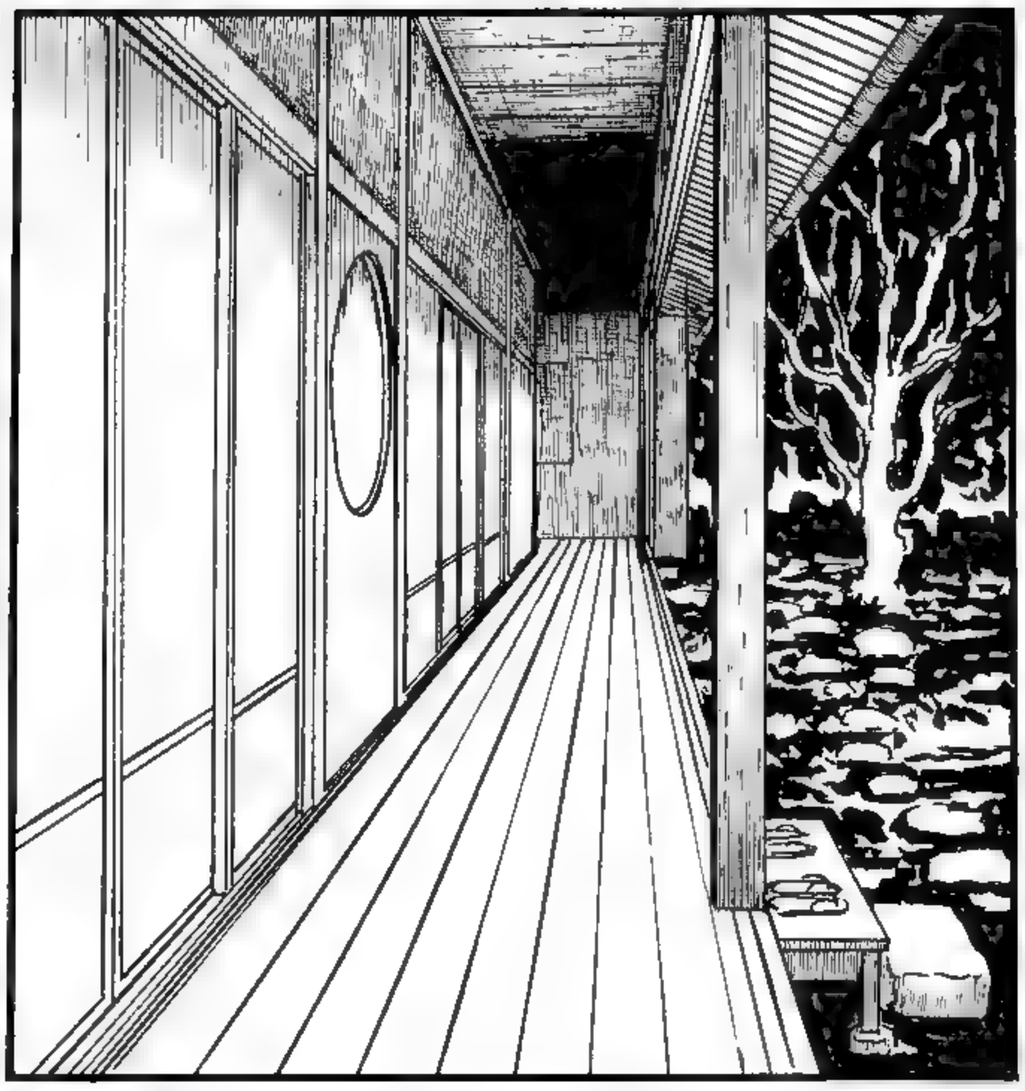
KYOKO.

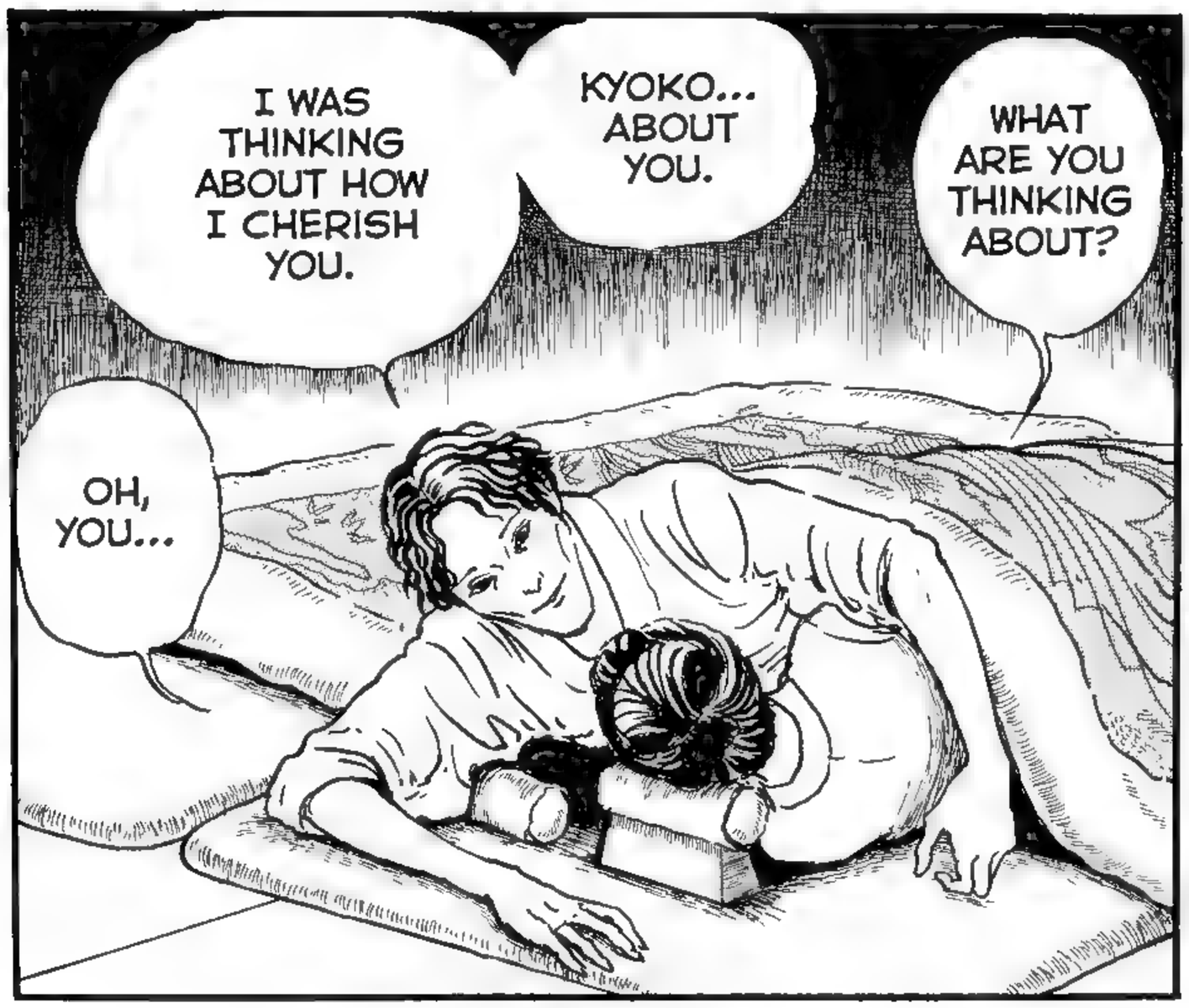
KYOKO ...

OH, DARLING, I'M SO HAPPY.

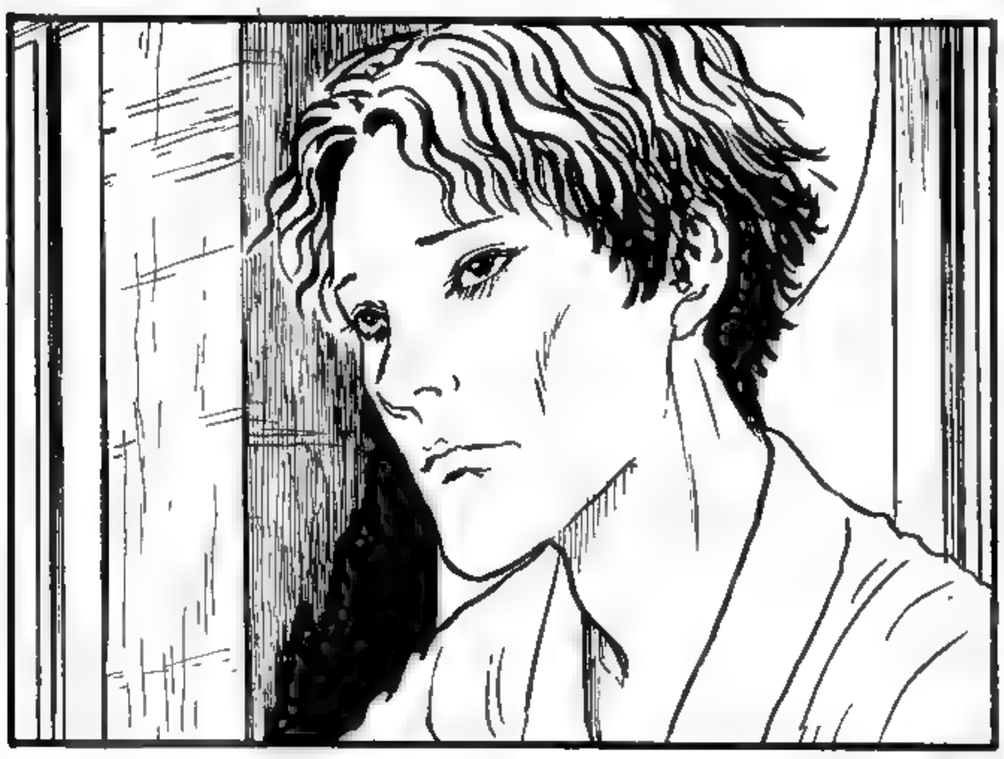
I LOVE YOU. I TRULY DO...






I WAS THINKING ABOUT HOW I CHERISH YOU.
KYOKO... ABOUT YOU.
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?
OH, YOU...

YOU'RE AWAKE?



DARLING ...

AH!

ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!

WHAT'S WRONG?

DARLING?

...

KYOKO?

I LOVE YOU.

KYOKO... I LOVE YOU...

KYOKO... I LOVE YOU...

I LOVE YOU...

I LOVE YOU... I LOVE YOU... I LOVE YOU...

I LOVE YOU...

I LOVE YOU...

...DARLING?

I... LOVE... YOU...

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

ARE YOU ILL SOMEHOW?

...

I LOVE YOU.

I LOVE YOU...

I LOVE YOU...

SHHHF

SHF

RIBBIT

RIBBIT

RIBBIT

RIBBIT

SNAP

KLAKKA KLAKKA KLAKKA

WHAT ON EARTH FOR...?

HE KEEPS SNEAKING INTO THE STORE-HOUSE AT DAYBREAK LATELY.

KLAKKA KLAKKA

HE CAN'T HAVE ANOTHER WOMAN?

RIBBIT

IT CAN'T BE...

RIBBIT RIBBIT

KREEE

KREEE

WHISPER WHISPER

HMM.

WHY WOULD HE LOCK IT...?

WHISPER WHISPER

I FEEL BAD FOR YOUR WIFE...

WE KEEP MEETING LIKE THIS.

BUT IT'S HOPE-LESS.

I KEEP TRYING TO LOVE KYOKO...

I FEEL THE SAME MYSELF.

BUT I FIND MYSELF UNABLE TO LEAVE YOU, NOT WHEN YOU'VE BEEN WITH ME SINCE MY YOUTH.

I'M SO HAPPY TO HEAR THAT. I'M A LUCKY WOMAN.

I FEEL SO TERRIBLE, THERE'S NO WAY I COULD EVER MAKE IT UP TO HER.

RUSTLE

U

KREEE

CHAK CHAK CHAK

SNAP

KLAKKA KLAKKA

...WHERE'S THE WOMAN?

KREEE

I LOOKED IN EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY ON THE SECOND FLOOR.

BUT I COULDN'T FIND SO MUCH AS A HOLE THROUGH WHICH A SINGLE MOUSE COULD ESCAPE.

WHERE IS SHE?

...

AND THE WHISPERED INTIMACIES OF MY HUSBAND AND HIS LOVER FILLED MY HEART WITH SUCH DESPAIR.

FROM THEN ON, I SLIPPED INTO THE STOREHOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT ANY NUMBER OF TIMES.

BUT I NEVER CAUGHT SO MUCH AS A GLIMPSE.

I TOOK ALL KINDS OF PAINS TO TRY AND SEE THE WOMAN.

DARLING ...

GLOOMY BY NATURE AND REMINISCENT OF A SNAKE, KADONO... PERHAPS HE WAS SUSCEPTIBLE TO POSSESSION BY THE FANTASTIC.

PERHAPS SOME KIND OF LIVING SPIRIT HAD BEWITCHED KADONO.

SLAS

...

WHISPER WHISPER WHISPER WHISPER

AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, I NOTICED SOMETHING STRANGE.

THE ONLY THINGS ON THE SECOND FLOOR THAT COULD MAKE A SOUND LIKE THAT ARE THE CHESTS.

THAT'S THE SOUND OF A LID CLOSING AND A LOCK BEING LOCKED. I THINK I'VE HEARD THIS BEFORE, TOO.

CHAK CHAK CHAK

THE NEXT DAY...

KREE

KRRW

CHAK CHAK CHAK

CHAK

KREE

KREE

CHAK
CHAK

KREE

*Bestowed

IN THAT INSTANT, MY SUSPICIONS OF THE PREVIOUS DAYS WERE COMPLETELY UNDONE.

COULD SUCH A THING AS THIS BE CALLED A FLASH OF INSPIRATION?

...

THE SHEER VERISIMILITUDE OF IT WAS SUCH THAT IT MADE ME GASP AND SHUDDER.

WHAT EXACTLY WAS THIS? MY HUSBAND WAS IN LOVE WITH A COLD, LIFELESS DOLL.

I LOVE YOU...

I LOVE YOU.

I LOVE YOU.

YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE I TRULY LOVE.

I LOVE YOU...

I LOVE YOU...

I'M FILLED WITH SUCH JOY.

AAAH ...

I'D BE A WRECK WITHOUT YOU.

WITH KYOKO, I'M SIMPLY A WRECK.

FLAP

SHF SHF

AAAH ...

I LOVE YOU...

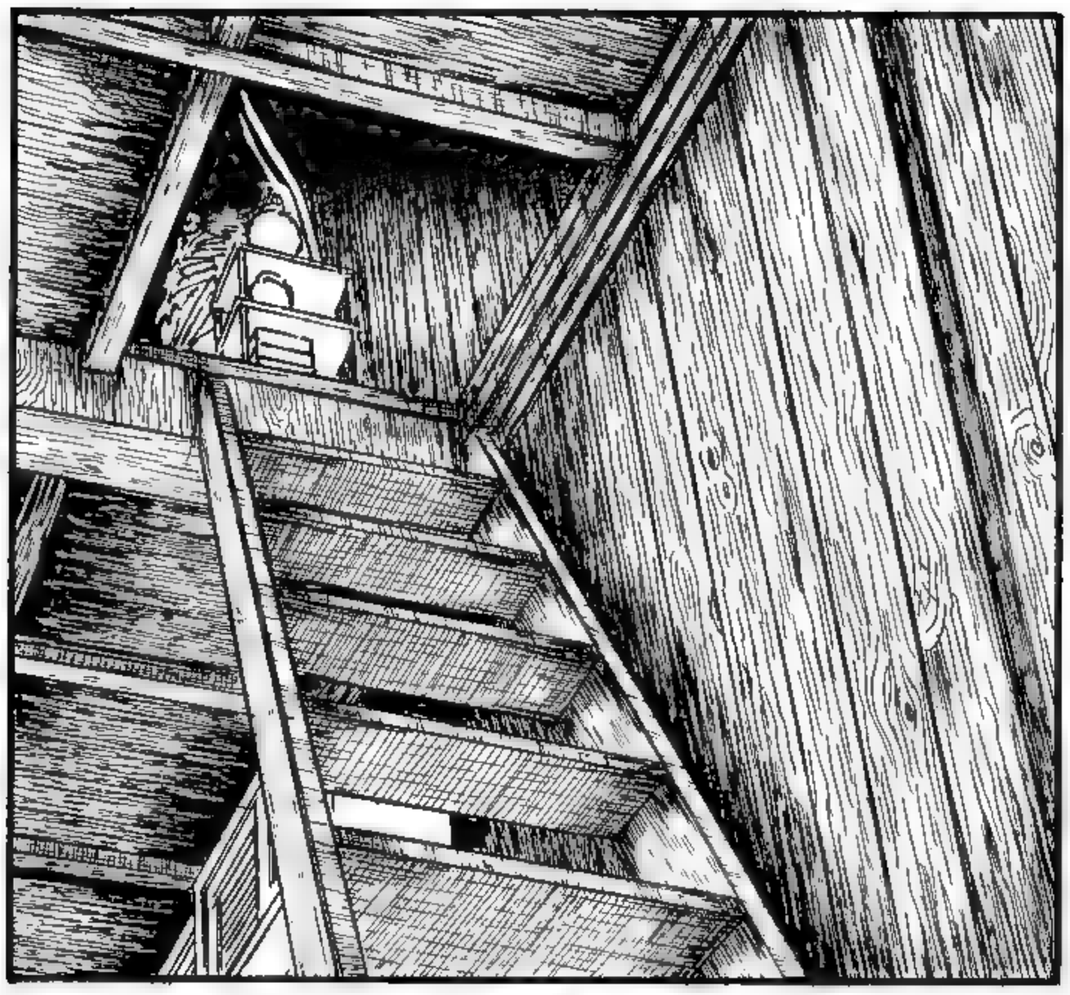
I TRULY LOVE YOU.

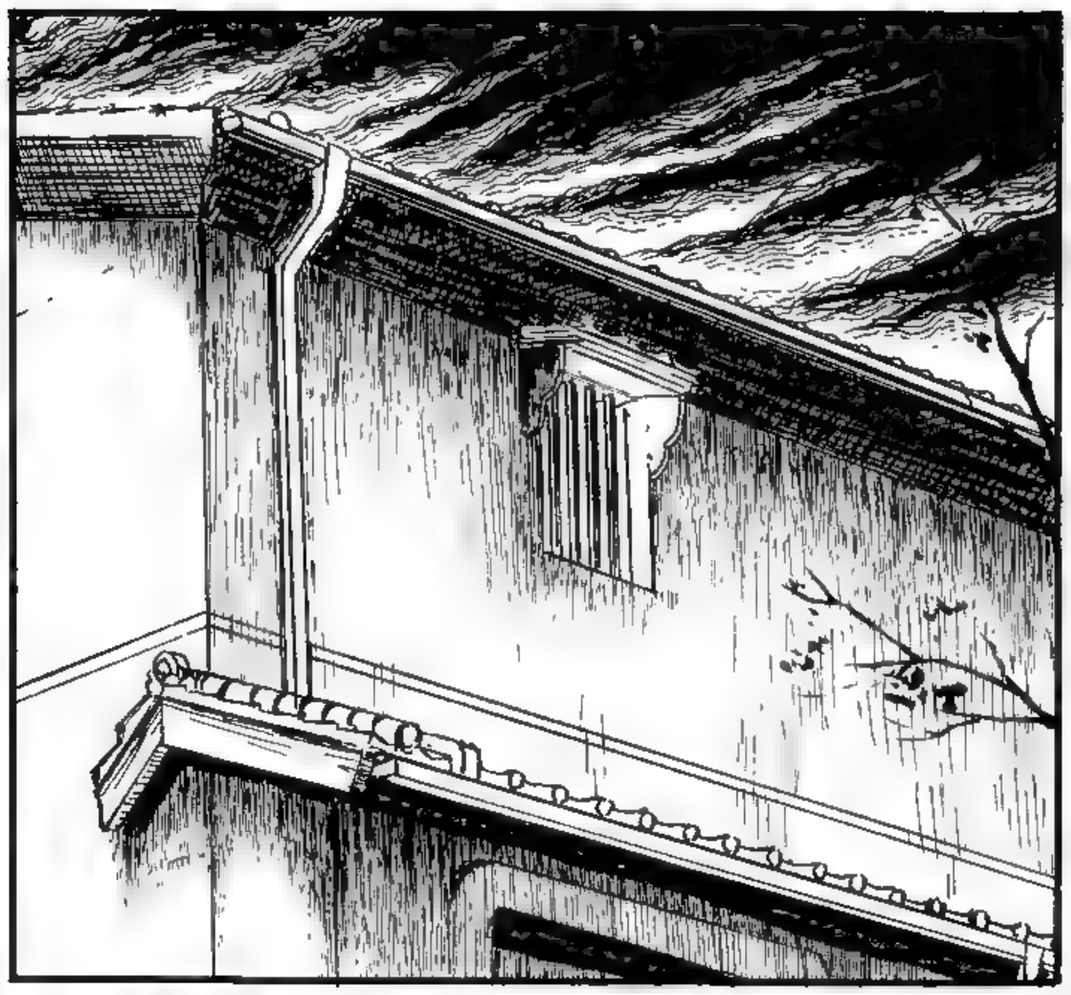
I LOVE YOU.

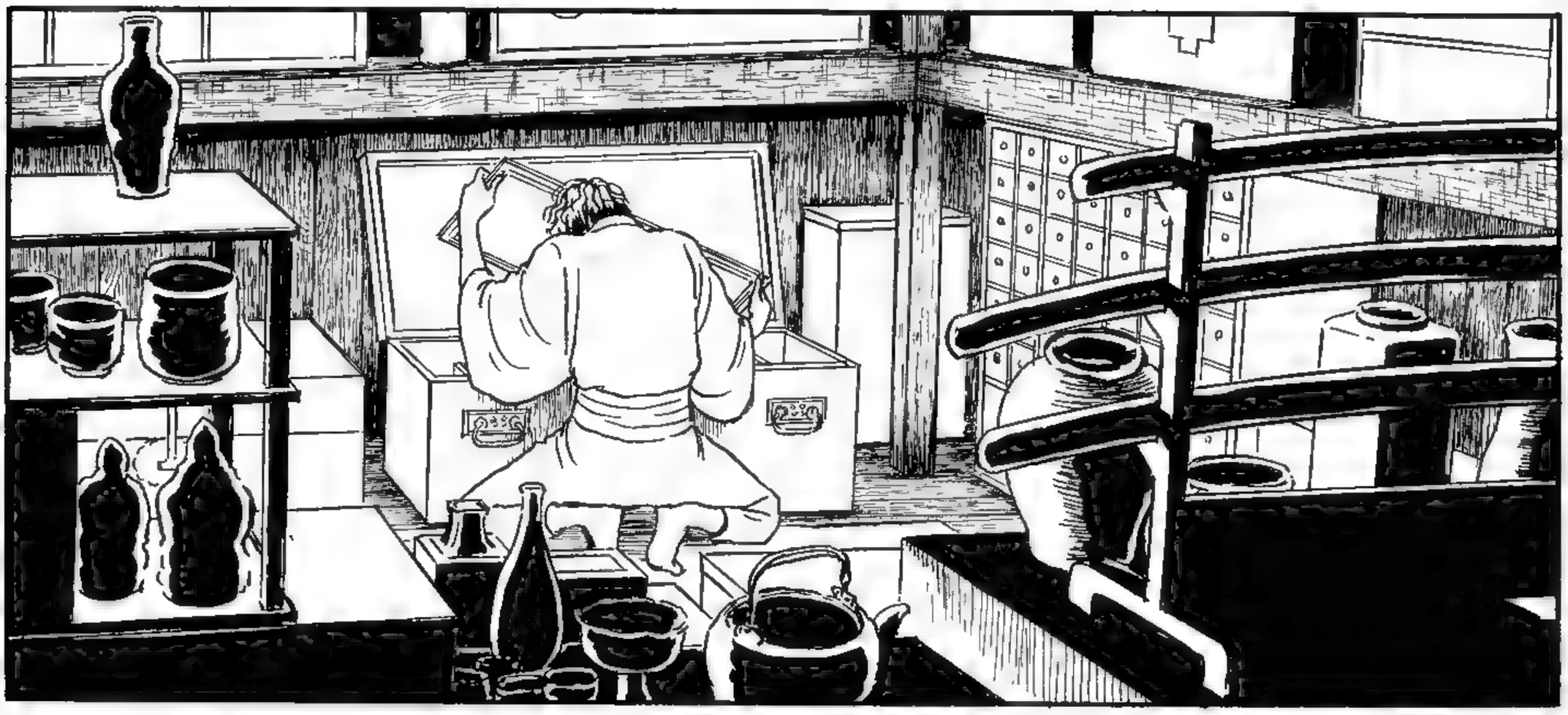
YOU DIS-GUSTING ANIMAL...

YOU BEAST ...

SHE







I WAITED AND WAITED, BUT MY HUSBAND DID NOT RETURN.

HOW LONG DID I SIT THERE THAT NIGHT?

PERHAPS HIS PARTNER WAS NOT ACTUALLY THE DOLL...

...BUT INSTEAD A LIVING HUMAN BEING.

SO WHY DID HE NOT RETURN?

ONCE HE SAW THE BROKEN DOLL, THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOTHING LEFT FOR HIM THERE.

AH, STRANGE ...

THE TRAP-DOOR IS OPEN.

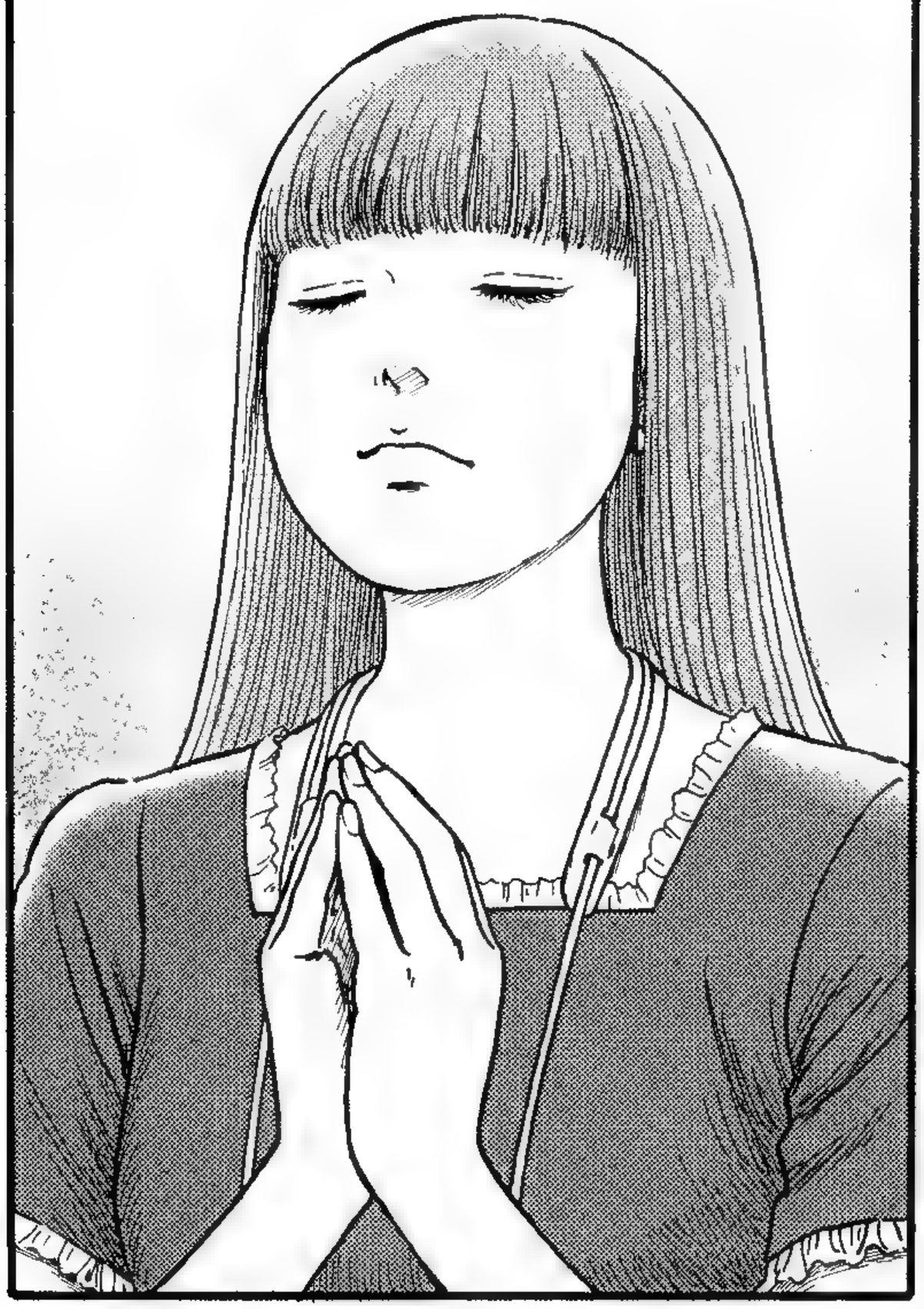
...WORE AN EERIE SMILE IN THE THROES OF DEATH.

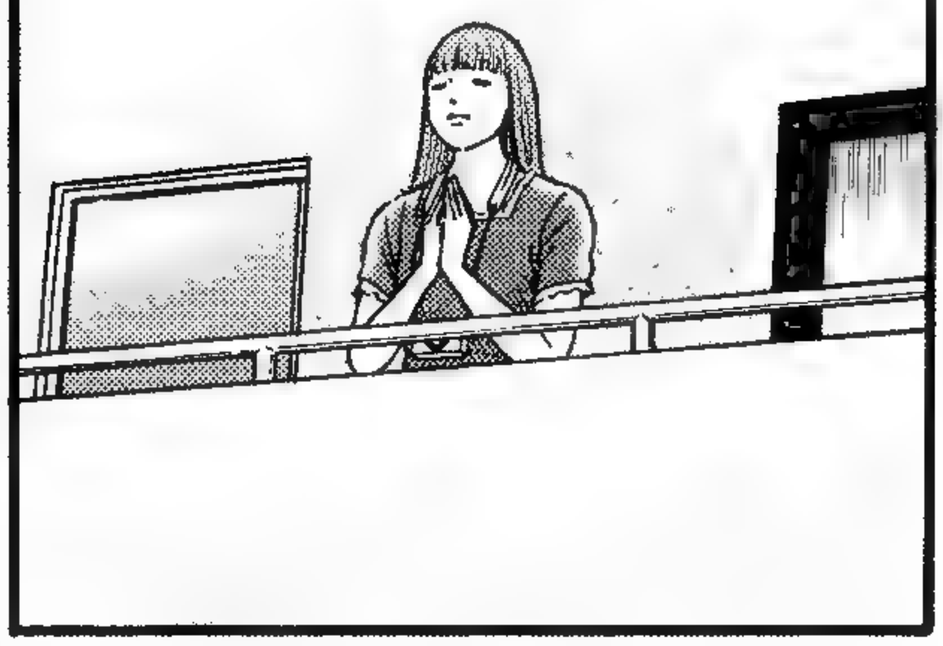
IN MY HUSBAND'S ARMS, THE DOLL...

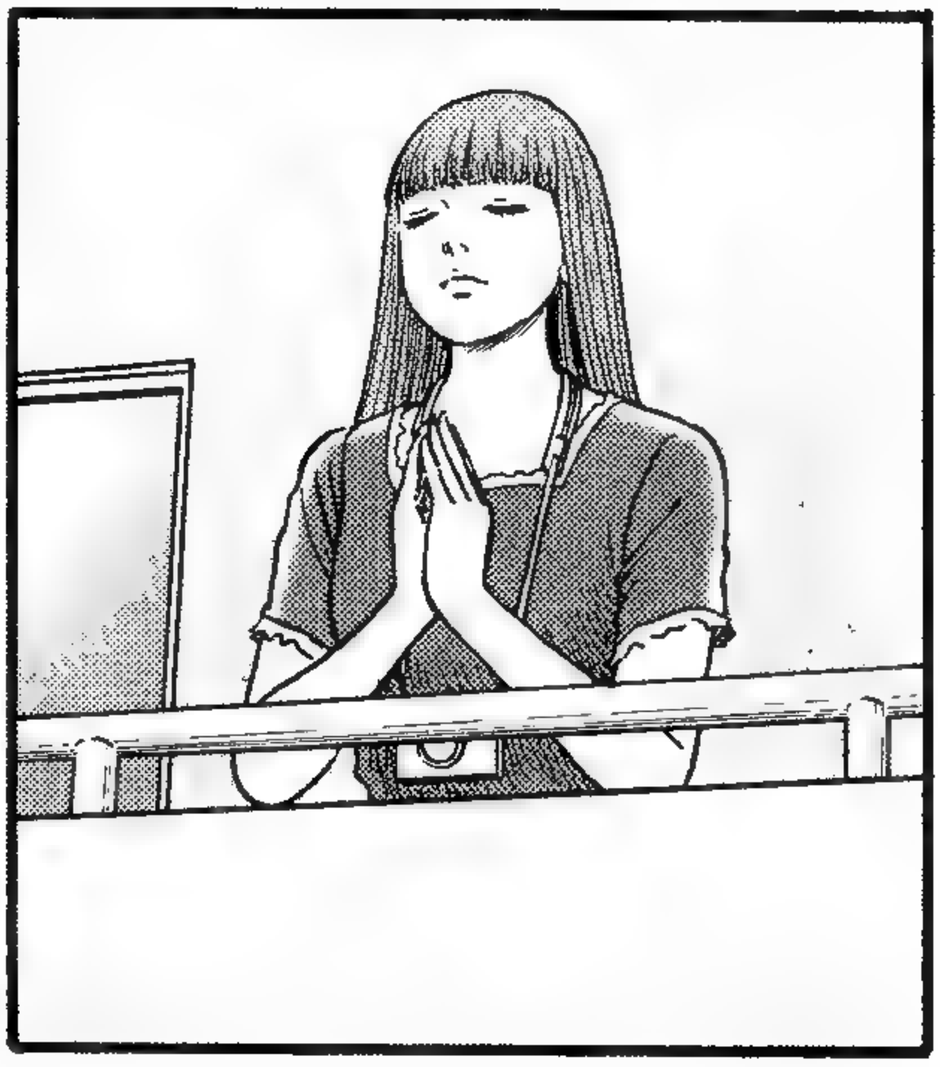
A FIENDISH LOVE... AN UNEARTHLY LOVE... THOSE WHO FEEL SUCH A LOVE ARE NUMBED TO THEIR VERY SOULS BY THIS MYSTERIOUS PLEASURE...

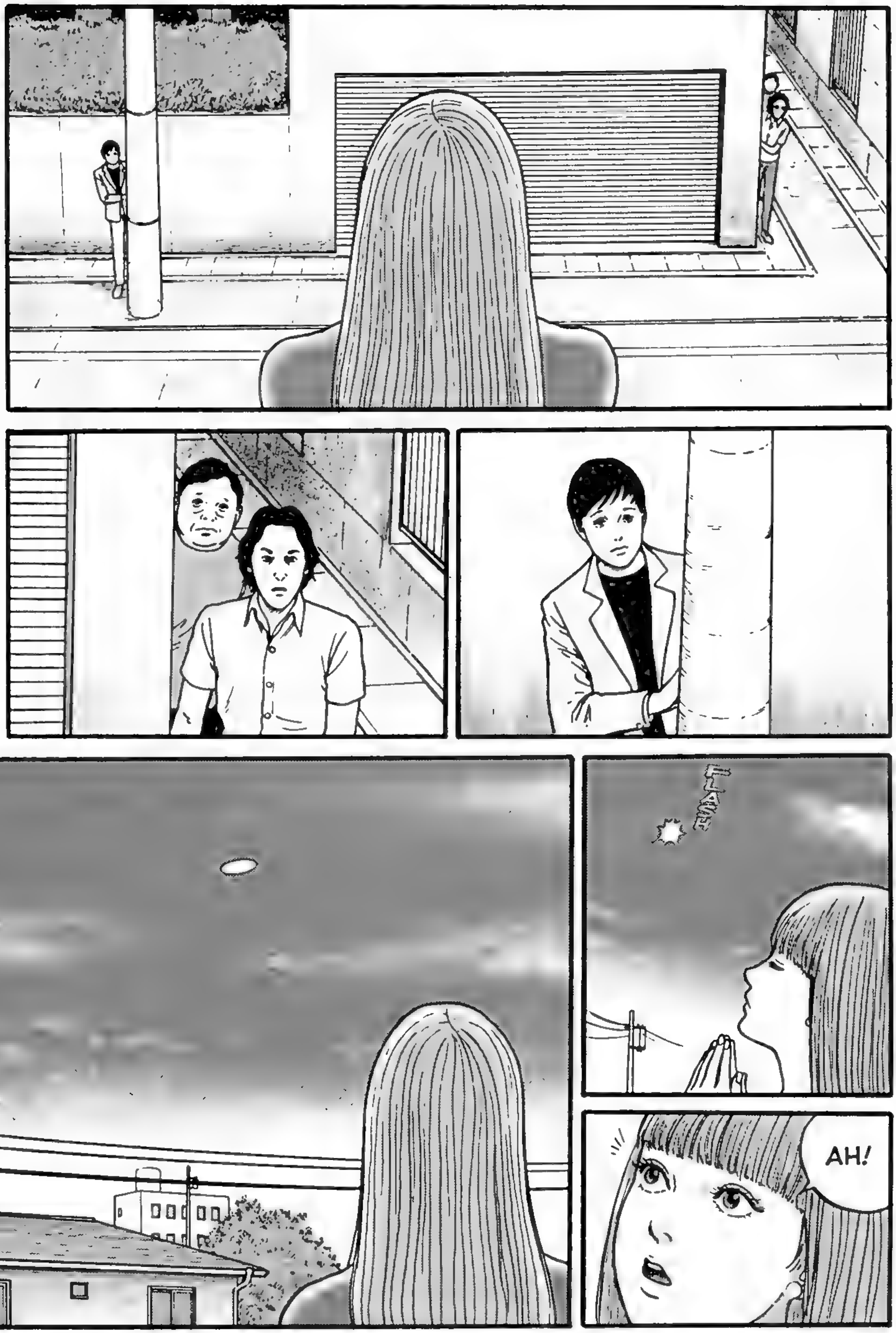
...WHILE THEY STRUGGLE WITH ENDLESS FRUSTRATION, CENSURED BY THE PANGS OF CONSCIENCE OF THEIR BOUNDLESS CRIME.

VENUS IN THE BLIND SPOT








FLASH!
AH!

FIZZLE

AH?!

TOO BAD... I DIDN'T GET A PICTURE.

IT DISAP-PEARED!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?

IF IT ISN'T IWATA!

...OH?

MY PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED.

BUT THAT'S THE FIRST ONE IN A WHILE.

HANG ON! I'LL COME DOWN.

YOU ALL SAW THE UFO, RIGHT?!

AND... KURATA! INOUE!

...

I'M HERE!

FLASH

...

MARIKO ...

UH... UM.

UFOS COME FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION! I JUST KNOW IT! MAYBE MY PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED?!

HEY! YOU SAW THE UFO DISAPPEAR, RIGHT?

HUH? DID YOU MAYBE NOT SEE THE UFO?

BUT YOU'RE MEMBERS OF THE NANZAN UFO RESEARCH SOCIETY!

HEY, IWATA, WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT? WHEN YOU'RE TALKING TO SOMEONE, YOU SHOULD LOOK AT THEM, YOU KNOW.

WHAT'S WRONG? YOU DON'T LOOK EXCITED AT ALL.

OH... SORRY.

BYE!

OKAY.

I'LL SEE YOU GUYS AT THE NEXT MEETING.

WELL, WHATEVER. I HAVE TO GO PUT TOGETHER A WITNESS REPORT.

...

THEY COULDN'T SEE HER, EITHER...

GLANCE

I CAN SEE HER FROM A DISTANCE, BUT SHE VANISHES THE INSTANT SHE GETS UP CLOSE.

I WONDER WHEN IT STARTED. WHEN DID MARIKO SHONO START DISAPPEARING FROM VIEW?

WHY, THOUGH?

BECAUSE WE LOVE HER TOO MUCH?

EVERYONE EXCEPT ME AND A FEW MEN...

WEIRDLY, IT SEEMS LIKE OTHER PEOPLE CAN ACTUALLY SEE HER.

I CAN'T EVEN SEE THE PERSON I LOVE THE MOST UP CLOSE!

AAH, IT'S TOO CRUEL.

MARIKO SHONO WAS THERE WITH HER FATHER.

First Nanzan Municipal UFO Symposium

THERE ARE A LOT OF SIGHTINGS IN NANZAN, SO IT'S BECOME FAMOUS AS THE UFO TOWN.

I FIRST SAW MARIKO AT A UFO SYMPOSIUM HELD BY THE CITY.

...AND I SIGNED UP.

COME JOIN THE NANZAN UFO RESEARCH SOCIETY!

SOON AFTER CAME THE LAUNCH OF WHAT WOULD BECOME THE NANZAN UFO RESEARCH SOCIETY...

SHE STOLE MY HEART AT FIRST GLANCE.

SHE WAS STUNNING, WITH THIS AURA ABOUT HER.

NANZAN UFO RESEARCH SOCIETY LAUNCH PARTY

THE FOUNDER OF THE GROUP WAS NONE OTHER THAN ASAO SHONO— MARIKO'S FATHER!

A DOCTOR BY TRADE, HE WAS AN UNPARALLELED UFO OBSESSIVE, BUT HIS DAUGHTER MARIKO MANAGED TO HOLD HER OWN AGAINST HIM.

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, I WAS STILL ABLE TO SEE HER UP CLOSE BACK THEN.

DESPITE BEING OUR YOUNGEST MEMBER, SHE SPOKE MORE PASSIONATELY THAN ANYONE ELSE ABOUT UFOS.

THE MEETINGS WERE ALWAYS AT THE SHONO HOUSE.

OFTEN, MARIKO WOULD BE THE LEADER OF THE DISCUSSION, IN PLACE OF HER BUSY FATHER.

SHE WAS REMINISCENT OF THE BEAUTIFUL VENUSIAN THAT THE FAMOUS UFOLIGIST GEORGE ADAMSKI MET.

SEEING HER UP CLOSE... SURE!

...AND GET DRUNK ON THE DELICIOUS WINE SERVED AT THE SHONO HOUSE.

I'D LISTEN EAGERLY TO HER ENTHUSIASTIC TALK ABOUT UFOS...

THE MEN WOULD BE EVEN FURTHER INTOXICATED BY MARIKO'S BEAUTY.

...OR THE ELEGANT NAPE OF HER NECK THAT WE CAUGHT GLIMPSES OF WHEN SHE FIXED HER HAIR.

AND THE ANGELIC SMILE THAT WOULD SLIP PAST HER COOL EXTERIOR FROM TIME TO TIME...

THE WOMEN WHO HAD BEEN WITH US IN THE BEGINNING LEFT THE GROUP ONE AFTER ANOTHER.

THE RESEARCH SOCIETY CHANGED FROM A PURE FOCUS ON UFO RESEARCH AND CAME TO BE RULED BY A GROUP OF MEN DESPERATELY IN LOVE WITH MARIKO SHONO.

I THINK ALL THE MEN WERE IN LOVE WITH HER.

MARIKO ...

UFO RESEARCH IS MY REASON FOR LIVING!

MARIKO'S FATHER ALSO NOTICED THIS CHANGE AND WANTED TO DISBAND THE SOCIETY, BUT...

DADDY! I WILL NEVER STOP!

AND IT LOOKED LIKE THE OTHER MEN ALSO FELL PREY TO THE SAME SYMPTOMS AROUND THE SAME TIME.

IT WAS AROUND THAT TIME THAT MARIKO STARTED TO DISAPPEAR FROM VIEW.

ALL RIGHT, I'D LIKE TO GET STARTED.

HA HA HA HA

IT'S A REAL SURPRISE HOW INCREDIBLY BEAUTIFUL CHAIRPERSON MARIKO IS, THOUGH.

HI, I'M SANO. I'M A TOTAL UFO FREAK. PLEASED TO MEET YOU!

THIS IS SANO.

BUT FIRST, LET ME INTRODUCE OUR NEWEST MEMBER.

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
I GUESS HE CAN SEE MARIKO...
CAN I HAVE A SECOND?
MARIKO.
...REPORTING ON THE UFO I WITNESSED THE OTHER DAY!
NOW THEN. I'D LIKE TO START BY...
WHAT IS IT?
YES, KURATA ?

ALIEN ABDUCTION. SO YOU MEAN INCIDENTS WHERE ALIENS KIDNAP HUMAN BEINGS.

THERE IS? ALL RIGHT.

THERE'S SOMETHING THAT'S BEEN BOTHERING ME.

I KNOW WE USUALLY DISCUSS UFO SIGHTINGS, BUT CAN WE MAKE ALIEN ABDUCTIONS TONIGHT'S AGENDA?

THE TRUTH IS...

SO WHAT'S BOTHER-ING YOU, KURATA?

THOSE ABDUCTED TESTIFY THAT THEY WERE EXPERIMENTED AND OPERATED ON BY ALIENS...

WHAT ?!

THERE'S A PERIOD OF THE PAST... THAT I HAVE NO CLEAR MEMORIES OF.

...I MIGHT HAVE BEEN ABDUCTED BY ALIENS.

...THE IMAGE OF A ROOM FILLED WITH DAZZLING LIGHT POPPED INTO MY HEAD.

WITH WHITE SHADOW PEOPLE.

I TRIED TO REMEMBER THIS TIME AND...

AND THIS NEXT PART IS KEY.

OF COURSE, I HAVE NO MEMORY OF GOING TO THE PARK.

AH!

AND THEN I GOT A TERRIBLE HEADACHE, AND WHEN I WOKE UP, I WAS IN THE PARK.

WHAT ?!

YOU'VE STARTED DISAP-PEARING!!

EVER SINCE THAT TIME... MARIKO!

THE TRUTH IS, I CAN'T ACTUALLY SEE YOU RIGHT NOW!

WHEN I GET CLOSE TO YOU, YOU DISAPPEAR.

RIGHT AFTER MY MEMORY OF THE BRIGHT LIGHT!

MY FEELINGS KEPT GETTING STRONGER, AND JUST WHEN I COULDN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE... I STOPPED BEING able TO SEE YOU!

I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU!

MARIKO, I HAVE TO TELL YOU!

PLEASE TAKE A LOOK!

AND I FOUND THIS.

SO I WENT LOOKING FOR PROOF!

I THINK THIS IS THE WORK OF ALIENS.

!

I FOUND A SMALL SCAR ON THE BACK OF MY HEAD.

I DO, TOO!

M-ME, TOO. I CAN'T SEE MARIKO, EITHER.

ME EITHER!

AH! I HAVE A SCAR, TOO?!

ME, TOO!

ALIENS EXPERIMENTED ON ME!

THIS IS PROOF OF AN ALIEN ABDUCTION.

BUT WHY?! WHY YOU OF ALL THINGS?!

THE RESULT OF THAT EXPERIMENT IS THAT I CAN'T SEE YOU ANYMORE.

AT LEAST HOLD MY HAND!

I-IT'S TOO MUCH. HELP ME, MARIKO... AT LEAST!

NO!!

AND YOU CAN'T SUDDENLY GO TELLING ME YOU LOVE ME!

W-WAIT. I DON'T UNDERSTAND AT ALL.

VENUS! MY PRECIOUS VENUS!

MARIKO! WHERE ARE YOU? WHERE?!

NO! *I'M* THE ONE WHO LOVES HER!

M-ME, TOO.

HNGH!

BAM

SHUT UP, IWATA!

DON'T GO LOSING YOUR REASON!

HEY! GUYS, STOP!

THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A UFO LOVERS' MEETING, YOU KNOW?!

M-MARIKO, YOU'RE BEHIND THE NEW GUY, AREN'T YOU?!

HEY! HAVE YOU ALL LOST YOUR MINDS?!

THAT'S ENOUGH!!

YOU DISGUSTING WORMS!

DON'T YOU EVER COME NEAR MY DAUGHTER AGAIN!

ALL OF YOU, GET OUT OF HERE NOW!!

AS OF TODAY, THE NANZAN UFO RESEARCH SOCIETY IS DISBANDED!

!

SOB SOB...

UNH...

SOB SOB...

UNH ...

THANK YOU.

COME ON. HAVE ANOTHER GLASS.

SANO... WAS IT?

TONIGHT WAS A GOOD LESSON FOR YOU.

STOP CRYING ALREADY, MARIKO.

SOB SOB ...

I'LL BE HER BODY-GUARD.

NO, NO. I WON'T STOP THERE.

YES, YOU DID A FINE JOB THERE.

I JUST FIGURED I HAD TO PROTECT MARIKO.

I HONESTLY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON.

SNIFF SNIFF

...SH'RILLY IS...

BUT MARIKO REALLY IS A BEAUTY...

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU AT NIGHT AGAIN. COME OVER RIGHT AWAY.

NISHI-MURA?

ZZZZ

ZZZ

THEN MAKE A HOLE WITH A FINE DRILL RIGHT UP TO THE EDGE THERE.

FIRST, WE MAKE A SMALL INCISION IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD TO EXPOSE THE SKULL.

VWEEEN

HOW MANY DOES THIS MAKE, I WONDER.

NOW THEN, WE'LL BEGIN THE SURGERY.

WE MUST FINISH THE OPERATION QUICKLY TO MINIMIZE THE PHYSICAL TRAUMA.

FINALLY, WE STICH THE SKIN BACK TOGETHER AND WE'RE DONE.

WE INSERT A SPECIAL MICRO CAPSULE AND THEN FILL THE HOLE WITH ADHESIVE.

WHEN THE MICRO CAPSULE IN THE SKULL RECEIVES THIS SIGNAL, IT AFFECTS THE VISUAL CORTEX IN THE OCCIPITAL LOBE.

BRAIN

VISUAL CORTEX

...WE PUT A DEVICE THAT EMITS A PARTICULAR SIGNAL.

MEANWHILE, IN THOSE EARRINGS THAT MARIKO NEVER FAILS TO WEAR, A KEEPSAKE FROM MY WIFE...

REGARDLESS OF THE FACT THAT THE IMAGE IS PICKED UP BY THE EYES, THE BRAIN BECOMES UNABLE TO RECOGNIZE IT.

IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S ONLY MARIKO THEY CAN'T SEE.

THE PERSON WEARING THE EARRINGS VANISHES WHEN THEY ENTER THAT BLIND SPOT.

THIS CAUSES A BLIND SPOT IN THE FIELD OF VIEW.

NOW, ONCE THE OPERATION IS OVER, WE ERASE THEIR MEMORIES OF THE LAST FEW DAYS WITH A SPECIAL DRUG AND AN ELECTRIC SHOCK, AND IT'S DONE.

I DEVELOPED THIS TECHNIQUE FROM MY HOBBY OF STUDYING UFOS.

BUT DOCTOR, THAT METHOD OF WIPING MEMORIES IS A FAIRLY DIFFICULT TECHNIQUE.

I DON'T BELIEVE UFOS ACTUALLY EXIST, BUT RATHER THAT THEY ARE A PRODUCT OF THE HUMAN BRAIN.

OF COURSE.

IF IT'S FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR DAUGHTER.

I'LL KEEP SQUASHING THESE REPULSIVE WORMS WHENEVER THEY LATCH ON TO MY MARIKO! AND YOU'LL CONTINUE TO HELP ME, YES, NISHIMURA?

BUT I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE RISK IF IT'S FOR THE SAKE OF MY BELOVED DAUGHTER.

TRUE. IT'D BE QUITE AWFUL IF I FAILED TO ERASE THE MEMORIES.

...AND MAKE IT SO THEY CAN'T SEE HER AT ALL, NOT EVEN FROM FAR AWAY!!

THANK YOU. I'M GOING TO ENHANCE THE STRENGTH OF THE SIGNAL FROM HER EARRINGS...

HEH HEH HEH... MWAH HA HA!!

HELP MEEEEE !!

NANZAN HOSPITAL

EEEAAAH!

AAAAH!

H-HURRY! CHECK MY BRAIN!

ALIENS! ALIENS OPERATED ON MY BRAIN!

DOCTOR, THE MAN TAKEN INTO CARE IN THE PARK IS DERANGED.

AND THEN I SUDDENLY GOT SLEEPY...

R-RIGHT. JUST BEFORE I WAS ABDUCTED BY ALIENS, I WAS DRINKING WITH MARIKO'S DAD.

AFTER THAT, I WAS IN AN OPERATING ROOM. ASK HER DAD WHAT HAPPENED!

...AND I GOT A BAD FEELING, SO I RAN OVER TO THE SHONO HOUSE.

I HEARD THAT MARIKO'S FATHER, DR. ASAO SHONO, WAS BEING QUESTIONED BY THE POLICE THAT DAY...

THE GATE'S OPEN!

HAAH

HAAH

KSH KSH

AH?!

THE HOUSE-KEEPER!

NNGH...

THIS WOMAN'S NOT HUMAN... SHE'S AN ALIEN! SHE'S A VENUSIAN WHO CAN MAKE HERSELF DISAPPEAR TO CONFUSE US!

WE CAUGHT MARIKO! SHE'S OURS!

STAY BACK, IWATA!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

UNH!

WHAM

YOU'VE GOT TO SNAP OUT OF IT!

STOP!

THUD

HER BEAUTY WAS TOO MUCH, TURNING THE LOVE AND ANIMAL PASSION TO VIOLENCE IN THE MEN WHO HAD LOST THEIR IDOL.

THAT EVENING, MARIKO'S BARELY RECOGNIZABLE BODY WAS FOUND IN A CORNER OF THE SHONO GARDEN.

MARIKOOOOOO! FORGIVE MEEEE!

MARIKO!

AAAAH!

AAAAH!

MARIKO WAS GONE.

BUT THIS MEANT NOTHING ANYMORE.

...OF ALL THE SOCIETY MEMBERS, INCLUDING THOSE ARRESTED FOR THE MURDER.

LATER, CAPSULES WERE REMOVED FROM THE SKULLS...

...I ALONE EXPERI-ENCED SOMETHING STRANGE.

AND THEN A LITTLE WHILE AFTER THAT...

FROM TIME TO TIME, IT WOULD APPEAR LIKE A KALEIDOSCOPE, FILLING MY FIELD OF VIEW.

THEY APPEAR NOW AS AFTER-IMAGES.

EVEN THOUGH MY BRAIN HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THEM, CLOSE-UPS OF MARIKO WERE BURNED INTO MY RETINAS.

THE LICKING WOMAN

THE NIGHT WAS...

MINO CONSTRUCTION

...A LITTLE WARM, THE AIR HUMID.

HYOOOO

HYOOOO

HM?

THE BREEZE FEELS GROSS...

...

HYOO
TAK
TAK

AAAH?!

COME ON IN.

OKAY! I'M COOOOMING!

PANT PANT PANT

DING DONG

THAT HAS TO BE TSUYOSHI, PYON!

DING DONG

HUH? WHAT?!

...THIS WEIRD WOMAN LICKED MY FACE AND MY HAND.

YEAH... MIKU, IT'S NUTS. ON MY WAY HERE...

BARK BARK

TSUYOSHI, WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'RE REALLY PALE.

HEY, PYON. HOW ARE YOU?

BARK BARK

YEAH. WELL, WHATEVER. IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL...

WE HAVE TO REPORT THIS TO THE POLICE!

GROSS. THAT'S SO CREEPY. WHAT A WEIRDO.

IT'S BECAUSE THAT CREEPY WOMAN JUST LICKED ME...

WHAT'S WRONG?

AH!

LICK LICK LICK

MIKU, MIND IF I JUMP IN THE BATH?

AAH, I'M ALL STICKY... IT'S THAT WOMAN'S SPIT. SO GROSS. AND IT SMELLS TERRIBLE...

I'LL RUN ONE NOW.

I'LL TURN THE LIGHT ON.

CHAK

...IT STINGS. I CAN'T SLEEP...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, TSUYO-SHI?

AAH, SOME-THING'S WEIRD...

!

PYON ?!

LOOK LOOK

WHAT'S WRONG?!

TSUYO-SHI!!

MIKU'S FIANCÉ TSUYOSHI DIED SUDDENLY AFTER BEING TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL.

SONOHARA HOSPITAL

EEEOOO

EEEOOO

PLEASE! YOU HAVE TO CATCH HER!

PYON LICKED THAT WOMAN'S SALIVA.

THAT HAS TO BE WHY!

HE SAID A STRANGE WOMAN LICKED HIM.

...THE NIGHT WAS ONCE AGAIN WARM AND HUMID.

A FEW DAYS LATER ...

ISUMURA SHOP

THEY'RE STILL INVESTIGATING, BUT WE KNOW IT'S AN ANIMAL POISON.

THEY DID FIND POISON IN THE BLOOD OF THE MAN AND THE DOG.

...

LICK LICK LICK

STOP IT! WHO *ARE* YOU?!

AH!

THAT TICKLES! HA HA HA HA HA...

LICK LICK LICK

HEY! WHOA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! YOU CAN'T JUST—

THE CAUSE OF DEATH IS THOUGHT TO BE POISON, AND THERE HAVE BEEN A SPATE OF SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THIS AREA RECENTLY. THE VICTIMS ALL TESTIFY THAT A PASSING WOMAN ON THE STREET LICKED THEM, SO POLICE ARE...

AROUND MIDNIGHT, A MAN IN THE CITY OF X WAS TAKEN TO HOSPITAL, COMPLAINING OF A SKIN ABNORMALITY. HE DIED EARLY THIS MORNING.

OR MAYBE SHE WEARS A FILM COATED WITH POISON OVER HER TONGUE?

NO SUCH MONSTER EXISTS! MAYBE SHE WAS JUST BORN DIFFERENT ?!

WE HAVE TO FORM A WATCH GROUP AND CATCH THIS CRIMINAL!

BUT YOU'RE OKAY IF YOU GET LICKED AS LONG AS YOU WASH IT OFF RIGHT AWAY.

CAREFUL IF YOU'RE OUT AT NIGHT!

I GUESS THE WOMAN'S TONGUE IS POISONOUS !

WHO ON EARTH IS SHE?!

SHE CAN'T BE HUMAN ...

A MONSTER ?!

TRUDGE

TRUDGE

TRUDGE

TRUDGE

TRUDGE

THAT'S WHY WE HAVE THE WATER. WE CAN WASH IT OFF RIGHT AWAY.

I DON'T WANT TO GET LICKED WHEN WE CATCH HER.

WHAT'S THIS LICKING WOMAN LOOK LIKE ANYWAY?

HURRY!

THAT WAS A WOMAN'S VOICE!

...ON WARM, HUMID NIGHTS LIKE THIS, WITH THE WIND BLOWING.

I HEARD THE LICKING WOMAN SHOWS UP A LOT...

AAAH!

AAAH!

MY BOY... MY BOY...

HELP! SOME-ONE!

LICK LICK LICK LICK

SOMEONE GO WASH THE KID OFF!

HEH HEH HEH HEH!

STOP!

HEH HEH HEH HEH!

SPLIT UP! WE HAVE TO FIND HER!

WHERE'D SHE GO?!

STOP!

YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY!

HAAH, HAAH...

STOP, LICKING WOMAN!

THERE SHE IS!

AH!

...

TWIRL

EEEE!!

Y-YOU KILLED TSUYOSHI AND PYON... YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY WITH IT!

LICK LICK
LICK LICK

AAAAH!!

FWSH

HEY! THERE SHE IS!

YOU CAN'T RUN FROM ME!

WHO

HER APPOINTED LAWYER IS EXPECTED TO REQUEST A PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION.

WE HAVE A FOLLOW-UP REPORT. THE SUSPECT'S IDENTITY IS STILL UNKNOWN, BUT SHE IS IN CUSTODY AT THE POLICE STATION.

YAMADA

THIS JUST IN.

THE LICKING WOMAN, WHO HAS PLUNGED THE ENTIRE COUNTRY INTO A STATE OF FEAR, WAS ARRESTED EARLIER.

AT THIS POINT IN TIME, THE POLICE HAVE NOT DISCOVERED ANY POISONOUS SUBSTANCES.

THE WOMAN'S TONGUE WAS EXAMINED, BUT NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY WAS NOTED.

SHAKE SHAKE SHAKE SHAKE

MEMBERS OF A LOCAL NEIGH-BORHOOD WATCH GROUP CAUGHT HER...

THERE'S NOTHING VISIBLE, BUT I FEEL LIKE I'LL LOSE MY MIND AT HOW IT ITCHES.

...EVEN STILL, MY SKIN FEELS WEIRD.

I WASHED OFF WITH WATER IMMEDIATELY, BUT...

NO, IT CAN'T BE... THAT WOMAN'S TONGUE WAS DEFINITELY POISONOUS.

...SO SHE WAS SENT TO A PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, AND THAT WAS THE END OF THE INCIDENT.

...AND THE POLICE WERE UNABLE TO FIND ANY POISON THAT WOULD PROVE SHE WAS A MURDERER...

EVENTUALLY, THE PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION FOUND THE WOMAN TO BE UNSTABLE...

SHE SUFFERED EVEN AFTER HER SKIN HAD HEALED.

NATURALLY, MIKU WAS NO EXCEPTION.

HOWEVER, HER VICTIMS REMAINED PARALYZED WITH TERROR.

SOME PANICKED AT A DOG LICKING THEM, WHILE OTHERS COULD NO LONGER EVEN KISS THEIR PARTNERS.

CAFE BAR
PAL BAR
BAR time
AND THEN, SEVERAL YEARS LATER...
I... MY NAME'S NAGAOKA. NICE TO MEET YOU.
YOU JUST SEEMED LIKE ME SOMEHOW... SO YOU REALLY ARE, HUH?
WHAT? YOU ARE, TOO?
WHAT A COINCIDENCE. SO YOU'RE A VICTIM OF THE LICKING WOMAN, TOO?
COMPARED WITH THAT HATRED, THE FEAR IS NOTHING...
SHE MURDERED MY FIANCÉ AND MY DOG. THE HATRED I FEEL FOR THAT WOMAN WILL NEVER GO AWAY.
BUT LATELY, I'VE BEEN OKAY WHEN A DOG LICKS ME.
I GUESS A LOT OF US ARE STILL RECOVERING.

STUFF ABOUT HOW HER SYMPTOMS GOT BETTER AFTER HER TREAT-MENT.

IT WAS IN ONE OF THE WEEKLIES.

WHAT ?!

THAT'S... SO THE THING IS... DID YOU KNOW SHE GOT OUT OF THE HOSPITAL RECENTLY?

IF THEY SET HER FREE, SHE'LL ONLY DO THE SAME THING AGAIN.

SHE MUST HAVE POSED AS A REGULAR PERSON WHEN SHE WAS ARRESTED.

THAT WOMAN'S NOT HUMAN.

THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS.

WHAT ?!

THE MAGAZINE SAID THAT AFTER SHE WAS DISCHARGED, THEY LOST TRACK OF HER, SO THE POLICE WERE FREAKING.

TRUE ...

...I'LL KILL HER!

IF IT DOES HAPPEN AGAIN...

THE LICKING WOMAN POPPING UP IN PLACES...

MAYBE IT'LL REALLY HAPPEN ALL OVER AGAIN.

I HAVE SOME POTAS-SIUM CYANIDE.

...

AT ANY RATE, I'LL KILL HER.

ONE WAY OR ANOTH-ER.

HOW?

KILL HER?

SHE IS THE LICKING WOMAN, RIGHT?

WE MAKE HER LICK IT!

BUT... HOW WOULD WE GET IT IN THE LICKING WOMAN?

WE USE IT IN THE LAB AT MY UNIVERSITY.

WHAT ?!

...

IS IT SAFE TO PUT CYANIDE ON YOUR SKIN?

H-HANG ON A MINUTE.

LISTEN. YOU PUT IT ON YOUR SKIN AND GET THE LICKING WOMAN TO LICK YOU.

IF YOU WANT, I CAN SHARE SOME CYANIDE WITH YOU.

JUST DON'T DRINK IT AND YOU'RE PROBABLY FINE.

WHEN YOU INGEST IT, THE CYANIDE REACTS WITH YOUR STOMACH ACID, WHICH PRODUCES CYANIDE GAS AND KILLS YOU.

IT IS HAZARDOUS, BUT I THINK IT'S OKAY AS LONG AS YOU DON'T INGEST IT.

THE POLICE ARE CURRENTLY MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO FIND THE WOMAN.

OUR NEXT STORY. THE CITY OF X HAS SEEN VICTIMS OF THE LICKING WOMAN APPEAR ONCE MORE.

SO FAR, FIVE CASES HAVE BEEN REPORTED.

YAMADA

HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN PATROLLING LIKE THIS AT NIGHT?

AND SHE KILLS MORE PEOPLE EVERY DAY...

CLENCH

HYOOO

THIS IS THE ALLEY WHERE I CAUGHT HER BEFORE.

HYOOO

!!

CLENCH

HNGH !

HYOO

SHFT

NOAH!

HNNGGGH!

EEEAH!!

AAAAAH!!

GRAB

HNGRRRRRGH

SHLRRRRRK

P

AMOUS

PLOP

HAAH.

HAAH.

HAAH, HAAH.

THIS WOMAN... SHE REALLY ISN'T HUMAN...

TWITCH TWITCH TWITCH TWITCH

TO JUST RIP YOUR OWN TONGUE OUT LIKE THAT...

...

HAAH HAAH

!

HI-HUI HI-HUI

THWP

BOING

HURK

NGAAH!!

BLEH

HURK HURK HURK

UGNO-ZO

UGNO-ZO

HURK HURK

HURK

GLUG

AAAAH!

...BOUNCED AROUND IN THE MOST DISTURBING WAY.

EVEN AFTER THAT, THE TONGUE COATED IN CYANIDE...

SUNO-ZO

SUNO-ZO

THE POLICE ARE INVESTIGATING WHETHER THIS WAS HOMICIDE OR SUICIDE.

SHAKE

SHAKE

THE CAUSE OF DEATH IS THOUGHT TO BE CYANIDE POISONING.

WE'RE HERE WITH YOUR FIRST NEWS OF THE DAY. AFTER MAKING THE RESIDENTS OF THE CITY OF X LIVE IN FEAR...

...THE LICKING WOMAN WAS FOUND DEAD ON THE ROAD LAST NIGHT.

THAT TONGUE... WHAT HAPPENED TO IT?

NAGA-OKA?

OH!

THE NEWS DIDN'T MENTION IT AT ALL.

...WAS SHE EXACTLY?

WHO...

MIKU SEARCHED FOR NAGAOKA, BUT THERE WAS NO TRACE OF HER.

SHE COULD FIND NO CLUES TO PROVE NAGAOKA EVER EXISTED.

THE NUMBER YOU HAVE REACHED IS NOT IN SERVICE.

THAT WOULD BASICALLY BE SUICIDE. THERE'S NO WAY!

NO... THAT'S RIDICULOUS?! IF SHE WAS THE LICKING WOMAN, THEN WHY GIVE ME THE CYANIDE?

IT—

IT COULDN'T BE.

I WONDER ...THE GLASSES IN THE LICKING WOMAN'S BAG...

THEY LOOKED A LOT LIKE NAGA-OKA'S.

...AND THE DAYS PASSED.

MIKU CONTINUED TO BE GRIPPED BY A POWERFUL FEAR...

IT ALMOST SEEMED AS IF THIS WAS EXACTLY WHAT THE LICKING WOMAN WANTED.

MIKU'S IMAGINATION AND CHAOTIC MENTAL STATE MAGNIFIED HER TERROR.

ARE YOU NOT GOOD WITH DOGS?

WHAT?

BARK BARK

BARK BARK

EVENTUALLY, THEY FELL IN LOVE.

YUKIO MADE MIKU FORGET HER MISERABLE PAST.

I...I LIKE DOGS ...

?!

ME, TOO.

MIKU... I LOVE YOU.

HNGRRK

SQUIRM SQUIRM SQUIRM SQUIRM

ZZSH ZZSH

AAAAH !!

GAAH ?!

HNGAH

HNGAH!

HRRK ...

NNGH ...

GDROIZO

GDROIZO

WHUD

THE PERSON WHO FOUND THEM TESTIFIED THAT THEY HAD SEEN A GIANT TONGUE JUMPING AROUND BESIDE THE BODIES, BUT THE POLICE IGNORED THIS INFORMATION.

GDROIZO

GDROIZO

AFTER THEIR BODIES WERE DISCOVERED, POTASSIUM CYANIDE WAS DETECTED IN THEIR BLOOD.

MASTER UMEZZ AND ME

...Kazuo Umezz's *Sister Mummy.*

BIZARRE COMICS KAZUO UMEZZ

SISTER MUMMY

MIRRA SENSEI

One of the books they had was...

Both of them loved scary manga.

Akiko

Yoko

I have two older sisters.

...which attacks the lovely heroines. It was strange to read, even sexual somehow.

A beautiful missionary school nun is sacrificed to a mummy...

I read it and was immediately enthralled.

AAAAH

BIZARRE COMICS KAZUO UMEZZ
THE CURSED MANSION
NOBUHIRO YAMADA

...the book *The Cursed Mansion* (from *The Baby Girl*).

After that, for my birthday, my kind-hearted sisters got me....

The unsettling figure of Tamami, the basement of the Western building, the guillotine, the helmet and armor...

It all dictated an ideal of gothic horror to me.

I enjoyed the power of the art, but it wasn't until I was a little more grown-up that I understood the depth of the story.

The first volume of *Orochi*.

I decided to go buy a book myself with my allowance at the only bookstore in our small town.

WEEKLY SHONEN SUNDAY
WEEKLY POST

THIS KINDA SHRIMP MONSTER CHOWS DOWN ON KIDS.

WHAT.

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

JUN, THERE'S THIS AMAZING MANGA BY KAZUO UMEZZ IN *SHONEN SUNDAY*.

One day in grade three or four, my friend Ueda said...

When I finally stood and read *Sunday* at the bookstore, the bit about the shrimp monster had already ended.

I didn't usually read the magazines because I preferred the books, so I went without this manga for a long time.

I still had only seen a tiny part of *The Drifting Classroom*.

W-WHAT IS THIS MANGA ...?

Instead, a battle between students unfolded inside a smoky classroom.

How-ever...

ALREADY NOTHING CUTE ABOUT ME

OOH, THANKS.

HERE.

And the days passed. I finally got the book as a birthday present from my kind-hearted sister in sixth grade.

BUT I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH ALLOW-ANCE!

I WANNA READ IT ALL AT ONCE IN THE BOOK!

UNNNH. I GUESS. MAKES SENSE.

THAT'S ALL THEY HAD. WE LIVE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, AFTER ALL.

IT'S THE *LAST* BOOK!!

TH-THIS IS VOLUME ELEVEN...

It was a long time before I managed to get ahold of all the books. And I was reluctant to say goodbye after I'd read them all, so I drew about ten pages on unlined report paper under the title *The Drifting Classroom volume 12*, but for some reason, it ended up being a total gag manga.

WHO'S THIS OLD GUY?!

I CAN TELL IT'S TOTALLY AMAZING HOW THEY'RE RECON-CILING HERE.

DYNA-MITE?!

THE DRIFTING CLASSROOM VOLUME 12

CHILDREN MUST PLAY CHILDREN'S GAMES!

I started reading *The Drifting Classroom* from the last volume. After being sent to the future, the children were already starving and half out of their minds as they headed like a surging wave towards the emotional big finish!

...was on the TV show *Kohaku Ten Best Songs*!

KOHAKU TEN BEST SONGS

Incidentally, if my memory's correct, the first time I saw Master Umezz in motion...

It goes without saying that my sisters set a tape recorder in front of the TV and recorded it.

BICHIGUSO ROCK DE ICHI NICHI!!

Makoto-chan was a big hit at the time...

SO EXCITIIIIIING !!

THAT'S THE *REAL* KAZUO UMEZZZZ!

...and Master Umezz gave a passionate rendition of "Bichiguso Rock" in costume as Ranmaru!!

...KYO MO BICHIBICHIIIIII !!

...someone (maybe my kindhearted sisters) brought me volume eight of *Makoto-chan*.

When I got appendicitis and peritonitis at the same time over the summer of ninth grade and I was in the hospital for a month...

Naturally, I loved *Makoto-chan*, too.

It's still a good memory even now.

OWWWWWWW!!

It made me laugh so hard, even though I had a drain in my stomach.

I greatly admired Kazuo Umezz for not stopping at mere jokes, although I expected nothing less of him.

HANDLE WITH CARE

KAWHAM!

You could simply enjoy *Makoto-chan* as a gag manga, but for me, it was a scathing critique of humanity.

I think it was for chewing gum.

1968 10 5

I'd only ever seen the character on a TV commercial when I was little.

GUM

By the way, I didn't know that *Cat Eyed Boy* was one of Master Umezz's works until I was in junior high.

The series hadn't been turned into a TV anime back then, so I wondered just who the characters were.

I remember it was animated. The characters later known as Cat Eyed Boy and Tsunami Summoners made an appearance.

DAMMIT!! WHAT AM I GONNA DO?!

WE DON'T GET TOKYO CHANNEL 12 OUT HERE IN THE BOONIES!!

FIRST GRADE DAYS

I think I found out it was Kazuo Umezz's *Cat Eyed Boy* because it was on Tokyo Channel 12 (now TV Tokyo) when I was in junior high.

Kazuo Umezz's Cat Eyed Boy set for TV broadcast!

Gifu TV broadcast a lot of Tokyo Channel 12 programs, and I spent day after day scouring the TV listings.

AAAAAH! I WANT TO WATCH IT! I HAVE TO!! THEY'RE NOT SHOWING IT ON GIFU TV?!

And then one day...

WHEN ARE THEY GOING TO SHOW IT?!

But no matter how much time went by, they didn't broadcast *Cat Eyed Boy.*

WHAAAAT ?!

THEY'RE GONNA SHOW *CAT EYED BOY!!*

JUN! I GOT GOOD NEWS!

My sister was wild with excitement in the living room.

HUH? WHAT?

GO ON AN' CHECK IT OUT!

IT'S WRITTEN DOWN ON THIS PAPER.

YOU GOTTA TELL ME!!

GIFU TV, YEAH?! WHEN?!

HM?

FWM

FWM

LEMME SEE THAT!

SNATCH

GOTCHA!

They were large hardcover books, and in them I encountered many works I hadn't read before.

When I was in high school, Asahi Sonorama put out the series *Kazuo Umezz Scary Books.*

This was at the time a popular game in my kindhearted sister's class, apparently.

In the end, it wasn't until I was an adult that I got to watch *Ghost Story: Cat Eyed Boy.*

Discovering so many astounding stories with such a high artistic level like "Grave of the Butterfly" and "Fear"...

...made me realize all over again Master Umezz's genius.

I was meeting with my editor at *Spirits*.

I could never exhaustively list all my memories of Master Umezz's works, but I only have limited pages here, so I will have to jump ahead to more recent times.

WHAAAT ?!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADAPT THE STORY OF THE FILM INTO A MANGA TO BE RELEASED AS A BOOK WHEN IT COMES OUT?

ITO-SAN, THE TRUTH IS, MASTER UMEZZ IS MAKING A MOVIE.

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TURN HIS SCRIPT INTO A MANGA, ITO-SAN!!

THAT'S EXACTLY IT!!

Y-YOU MEAN YOU WANT ME TO ADAPT MASTER UMEZZ'S FILM INTO A MANGA?

UNNH ...

...BUT I WANT TO DO IT...

I SAY THAT...

IT WOULD BE AN INCRED-IBLE HONOR.

ARE YOU SURE I'M THE RIGHT PERSON?

TH-THIS IS INCRED-IBLE.

UNDER-STOOD.

WELL, I'LL SEND YOU THE SCRIPT LATER, SO PLEASE THINK ABOUT IT.

IT WOULD BE TOUGH.

AAH, BUT I'M ALREADY WORKING ON OTHER SERIES BEFORE THE FILM COMES OUT.

RIP

And then the script arrived.

EXPRESS

Mr. Junji Ito

SPIRITS

PROTAGONIST, KAZUO UMEZZ!!

MOTHER ...

Mother (working title)
Draft No. 4

Main Characters

Kazuo Umezz:
Protagonist. Manga artist

Ichie Umezz:
Kazuo Umezz's mother

Kimio Umezz:
Kazuo Umezz's father

I started imagining what it would be like if it was drawn in picture form.

At the same time, it overturned stereotypes. I was blown away!

It was a frightening and sad story about Master Umezz and his mother.

AND THE KEY TO IT ALL, THE MONSTER... I'D WANT TO MAKE THIS IN THE STYLE OF UMEZZ!

AND THEN HIS MOTHER... RIGHT. I'M SURE I SAW A PICTURE OF MASTER UMEZZ AND HIS MOTHER IN A BOOK SOMEWHERE. I'LL HAVE TO LOOK FOR IT THE NEXT TIME I'M HOME.

...WOULD BE LIKE THIS!

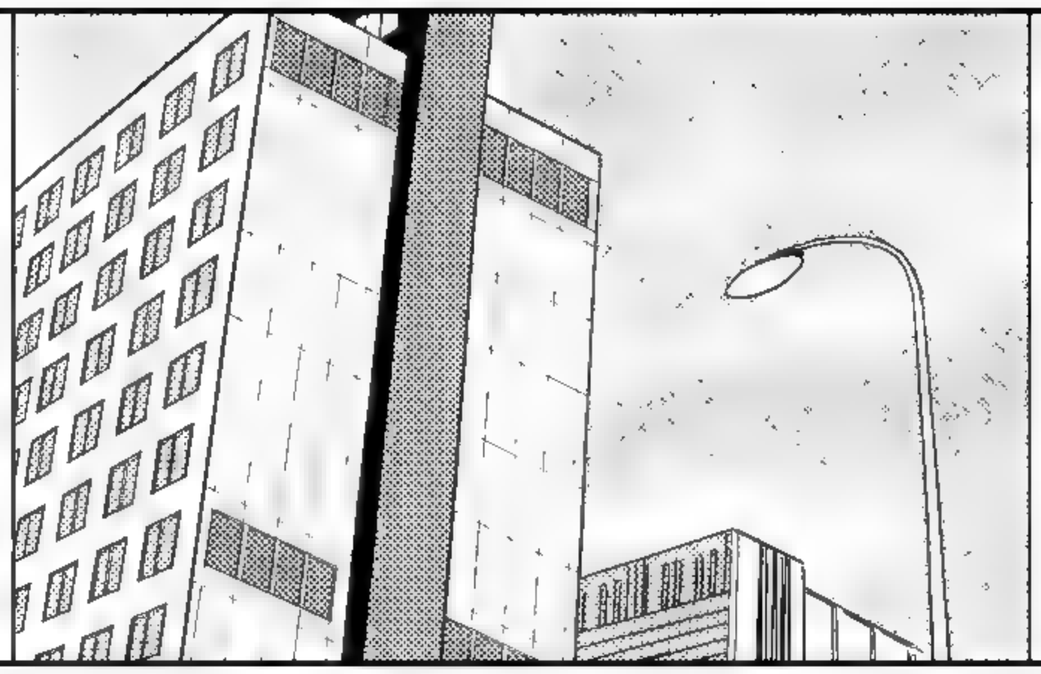
FIRST, THE HERO KAZUO UMEZZ...

GWAEH

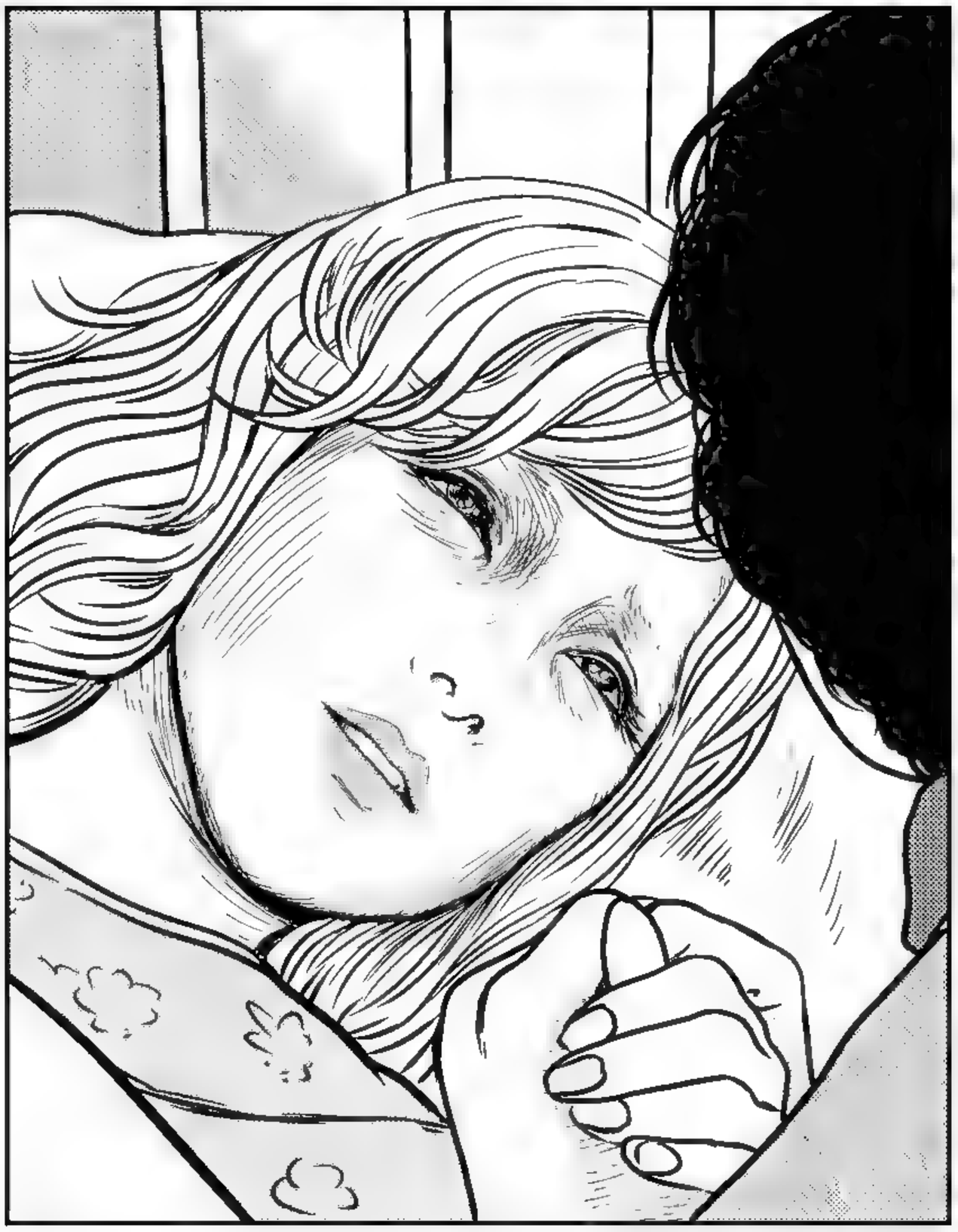
LIKE THIS MAYBE.

I WANT YOUUUUU!

And then at last Kazuo Umezz's first work as a director, *Mother,* was complete!! I headed to the screening on June 20.



In the end, I had to abandon the idea of adapting the movie since my own schedule wouldn't allow it.



KRRR

WHAM

MASTER UMEZZ'S MONSTER SHONE, EERIE AND BEAUTIFUL.

I WAS COM-PLETELY WRONG.

...MAKE THE MANGAAAAA!

I-I'M SO GLAD I DIDN'T...

As a fan, I'm eagerly awaiting new manga work, but I also can't wait to see what Master Kazuo Umezz does now that he's also got the medium of movies to work with!

I ended up visiting the Umezz home after that for this project! I never even dreamed I would have an opportunity like this!

HOW LOVE CAME TO PROFESSOR KIRIDA

BASED ON THE STORY "HOW LOVE COME TO PROFESSOR GUILDEA"
BY ROBERT HICHENS

スライド

MY NAME IS YUZUHO HAYAMA. OCCUPATION: WRITER.

I'VE GOT TERRIBLE WRITER'S BLOCK, THOUGH, SO I'M CURRENTLY HIDING OUT AT MY PARENTS' HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY.

SO MANY OLD BOOKS...

HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL.

HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE I WAS IN THE STORE-ROOM?

Sumiko Hayama
The Diary of a Parrot-Woman

THIS BOOK FELL OUT...

Sumiko Hayama
The Diary of a Parrot-Woman

KLAK

JUMP

WHO'S THERE ?!

MOM, THIS SUMIKO HAYAMA PERSON WANTED TO BE A WRITER IN TOKYO.

SUMIKO HAYAMA? NOW WHO'S THAT? ONE OF OUR ANCESTORS MAYBE.

Sumiko Hayama

The Diary of a Parrot Woman

"THE DIARY... OF A PARROT WOMAN"...

A JOURNAL ?

WOW... ENGAI KIRIDA? THE SAME ENGAI KIRIDA OF THAT PRIZE YOU WON?

PROFESSOR KIRIDA! THAT'S ENGAI KIRIDA!! THIS WOMAN MET ENGAI KIRIDA! AMAZING!

SHE WROTE ABOUT HAVING "STUDIED UNDER PROFESSOR KIRIDA AT XX UNIVERSITY"!

LOOK!

HMM. SO SHE IS A RELATIVE THEN.

KIRIDA WAS KNOWN TO BE AN EXTREME MISANTHROPE AND REMAINED SINGLE HIS ENTIRE LIFE UNTIL HIS MYSTERIOUS DEATH AT THE AGE OF 57.

SURPRISINGLY, THIS JOURNAL CONTAINED A RECORD OF THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO THAT DEATH. WHAT FOLLOWS ARE EXTRACTS FROM THE ENTRIES PERTAINING TO KIRIDA.

ENGAI KIRIDA.

HE WAS A SCHOLAR OF JAPANESE LITERATURE AND A LITERARY AUTHOR IN THE MEIJI ERA.

HIS LITERARY STYLE WAS AESTHETIC AND REFINED, MAKING HIM A UNIQUE PRESENCE IN THE HISTORY OF LITERATURE.

TOKYO...

THE TIME WAS THE LATE MEIJI ERA.

WELCOME. THE MASTER IS WAITING FOR YOU INSIDE.

APOLOGIES FOR HAVING YOU COME ALL THE WAY HERE. I NEED TO LEARN ABOUT CHRISTIANITY FOR THE NOVEL I'M WRITING.

SO YOU'RE FATHER MURCHISON?

IF POSSIBLE, I'D RATHER NOT BE INDEBTED TO OTHERS.

HMPH. I COULD SIMPLY REFERENCE SOME BOOKS.

PLEASE, ASK ME ANYTHING ABOUT THE TEACH-INGS OF CHRIST.

I'M QUITE HONORED TO BE ABLE TO ASSIST YOU, PRO-FESSOR KIRIDA.

HMPH. LOVE, *HM?* I'M THE SORT THAT'S DISGUSTED BY THIS "LOVE," YOU SEE.

OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN BY THE LOVE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

YES, THAT'S EXACTLY RIGHT.

FATHER MURCHI-SON. IS IT TRUE THAT CHRISTIAN-ITY IS A RELIGION OF LOVE?

ALL THAT NEED EXIST IN THIS WORLD IS A SUBLIME BEAUTY.

FOR MYSELF, THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS LOVE IN THIS WORLD. EMOTIONAL LOVE, INDEED. PHYSICAL LOVE, IT'S THE HEIGHT OF FOOLISHNESS.

AT SUCH TIMES, I AM FILLED WITH THE DESIRE TO RETURN THIS LOVE WITH EXTREME CRUELTY.

WHEN I SENSE THAT I AM THE LEAST BIT LOVED BY ANOTHER, IT SICKENS ME. I CAN'T STAND IT.

THIS GRAY BIRD? NO NEED FOR FLATTERY.

BUT THIS FELLOW DOES AN EXCELLENT IMITATION OF HUMAN BEINGS.

HMPH.

THAT PARROT IS EXTREMELY BEAUTIFUL !

OH... BEAUTY? THAT IS INDEED A WONDERFUL THING.

IT'S ONLY AFTER HE'S COMPLETED HIS STUDY THAT HE COMMENCES HIS IMPRESSION. IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH HIS SUBJECT POSSESSES HIM. I APPRECIATE HIS PASSION FOR RESEARCH.

AND NOT SIMPLY SOME SUPERFICIAL MIMICRY. HE ACTUALLY STUDIES HIS TARGET QUITE PASSIONATELY BEFORE BEGINNING.

COME BACK WHEN YOU WON'T DISGRACE YOURSELF!

YOU STILL CAN'T WRITE ANYTHING BUT THESE LUKEWARM TALES?!

HAYAMA !!

...

?!

THE PARROT HAS QUITE THOROUGHLY MEMORIZED THOSE CONVERSATIONS.

EACH TIME, I TELL HER MY HONEST OPINION.

SHE WISHES TO BE A WRITER WITH THE PASSION THAT ONLY *THAT* SORT CAN MUSTER. SHE COMES TO ME WITH THESE TERRIBLE STORIES.

THERE'S THIS DREADFUL WOMAN STUDENT AT MY UNIVERSITY.

I'M HAVING HER WAIT OUTSIDE UNTIL YOU AND I ARE FINISHED.

SHE'S ACTUALLY COME AGAIN FAITHFULLY TODAY.

DID YOU READ THE MANUSCRIPT I BROUGHT YESTERDAY?

PRO-FESSOR!

HOWEVER, THERE'S STILL MORE I WOULD HEAR. WILL YOU COME AGAIN, PERHAPS?

FATHER MURCHISON, YOU TOLD ME MANY THINGS TODAY WHICH WILL BE USEFUL.

YES, GLADLY.

QUIT THIS NONSENSE AND STOP ROBBING ME OF MY PRECIOUS TIME.

YOUR WRITING IS NOTHING MORE THAN COMMON FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVE!

HAYAMA? YOU'RE STILL HERE? ...YES, I READ IT.

WHERE DO YOU LIVE? I SHALL SEE YOU HOME.

MISS HAYAMA, PLEASE CHEER UP.

I WANT TO WRITE BEAUTIFUL, LOFTY NOVELS LIKE HIS.

AND THEN... MORE THAN ANYTHING, I WANT HIM TO APPROVE OF ME!

IT'S TRUE HE'S A MISAN-THROPE, AND THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE WHO HATE HIM. BUT...

I... I RESPECT PROFES-SOR KIRIDA FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

I TRULY DO LIKE HIM AND THE BEAUTIFUL WORK HE CREATES.

NO. TO LOVE IS ONLY NATURAL.

W-WHY THAT'S— I MEAN, IN *LOVE* WITH HIM... A GREAT MAN LIKE THAT. AND HIS AGE...

...WHAT?!

MISS HAYAMA, ARE YOU IN LOVE WITH PROFESSOR KIRIDA?

...HE MIGHT SEE THE BEAUTY OF YOUR WORK.

IF YOU COULD LOVE HIM FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART ...

HE HAS LIVED THUS FAR WITHOUT BEING LOVED. WE OUGHT TO OFFER HIM OUR SYMPATHY.

I FELT THIS TODAY WHEN I MET WITH PROFESSOR KIRIDA. HE IS IN NEED OF LOVE.

FWOO

ALL RIGHT ...

OH. I FELT A GUST OF HOT AIR JUST NOW...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, FATHER?

AH ?!

EARLIER, SHE BROUGHT ME ONE OF THOSE FRANK PSYCHOLOGICAL STORIES THAT ARE SO POPULAR RIGHT NOW.

WHAT ?!

FATHER MURCHISON. IT SEEMS YOU'VE BEEN WHISPERING IN HAYAMA'S EAR?

SHE LEFT IN TEARS. I'VE FINALLY GOTTEN RID OF THAT IDIOT.

NATURALLY, I RIPPED IT UP AND TOSSED IT AWAY ON THE SPOT. AND THEN I TOLD HER SHE HAD NO TALENT FOR WRITING AND SHE SHOULD GO BACK TO HER HOMETOWN IMMEDIATELY.

THANK YOU, FATHER MURCHI-SON.

AND IT WAS ANNOYINGLY A LOVE LETTER TO ME BORROWING THE FORM OF A STORY!

SPLSH

CHATTER CHATTER

CHATTER CHATTER

SPLSH

SUICIDE! IT'S A SUICIDE!

WHAT HAP-PENED ?

WE GOT A DROWNER !

AAH!

...

DEAR LORD...

OHHHH ...

IF I HADN'T SAID THAT TO HER...

AAAH... WHAT SIN HAVE I COMMITTED ...?

LORD ...

PLEASE SAVE SUMIKO HAYAMA.

LEAVE ME!

I-IT'S NOTH-ING.

NGH ...

HNGH ...

PROFESSOR? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

I WISHED TO SPEAK WITH THE PROFES-SOR.

EXCUSE ME.

FATHER? YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT AT THIS HOUR?

BUT THE TRUTH IS, SOMETHING AWFUL'S HAPPENED.

PROFES-SOR, I'M TERRIBLY SORRY TO DISTURB YOU AT THIS HOUR.

YOU BELIEVE THAT...I AM ATTRACTIVE ENOUGH TO HAVE SOMEONE HAUNT ME, DON'T YOU?

LET ME ASK YOU.

YES ...?

FATHER MURCHI-SON.

THIS AFTER-NOON, MISS SUMIKO HAYAMA—

Y— YES.

FATHER, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?!

IT'S QUITE DISAGREEABLE! THIS THING I DISLIKE LIKING ME, LINGERING AT MY SIDE...

WHAT?! ...Y-YES.

OF COURSE, A GREAT MAN SUCH AS YOURSELF... ARE YOU NOW...

AWAY!

I SAID, GET AWAY!!

AAAH!

?!

WHAT'S WRONG ?!

PROFES-SOR ...

YOU KNAVE! DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?!

YOU SHAN'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!

IT'S NOT VISIBLE, BUT *IT* HAS SLIPPED INTO MY ROOM AND NOW IT HAUNTS ME. EVER SINCE THIS AFTERNOON...

AND NO MATTER WHERE I FLEE, IT FOLLOWS!

SOMETHING... SOMETHING HAS SLIPPED INTO MY HOUSE! I CAN FEEL IT!

SOME-THING IS DEFI-NITELY HERE WITH ME.

I AM OF SOUND MIND!

IT'S NOT... VISIBLE ?

YES, THAT'S RIGHT! WHY DO YOU STARE AT ME SO?!

IT SEEKS LOVE FROM ME! EVEN THOUGH I'VE HAD QUITE ENOUGH OF THAT WITH SUMIKO HAYAMA!

IT CLEARLY HAS LUST FOR ME!

IT BREATHES ITS HOT BREATH ON MY NECK...

...IT CARESSES MY BODY!! AAH, SO DISGUSTING !

WHAT ?! ...

SHE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE THIS AFTERNOON BY JUMPING IN THE RIVER.

PROFES-SOR, ABOUT MISS HAYAMA...

Y- YOU— !!

...FOR THE LORD TO WATCH OVER MISS HAYAMA.

PROFES-SOR, PLEASE PRAY WITH ME...

BUT SHE'S STILL UN-CONSCIOUS, HOVERING BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH...

NO. NOT AT THE MOMENT.

AND... IS SHE DEAD?

NO... THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

ARE YOU SAYING IT'S *MY* FAULT THAT HAYAMA TRIED TO KILL HERSELF?!

WHY SHOULD *I* PRAY?!

GET OUT...

GET OUT!

AAH! DAMMIT!

IF YOU CAN'T DO THAT, THEN GET OUT.

HMPH. PRAYER! YOU'RE A PREACHER. GET RID OF *THIS!*

...

PLEASE, I BEG YOU, HELP THE PROFES-SOR...

FATHER, I'M SO SCARED, SO VERY FRIGHTENED.

...THE FATHER CALLED ON KIRIDA ONCE MORE.

SEVERAL DAYS LATER...

HAAH.

HAAH, HAAH.

HAAH.

HAAH.

HAAH, HAAH.

YOU MUST REMAIN STRONG.

PROFES-SOR.

...BUT HIS ENERGY'S FINALLY...

HE'S BEEN FIGHTING SOMETHING ALL THIS TIME...

IT COULDN'T BE ANYONE ELSE.

FATHER, *IT* IS IN FACT HAYAMA.

WHAT?

...SUMIKO HAYAMA...

Y-YOU SICKEN ME...

THAT HAYAMA... HOW FAR WILL SHE GO TO RIDICULE ME?!

BUT I'VE NO DOUBT THAT HAYAMA'S MIND SLIPPED OUT OF HER BODY AND CAME TO ME HERE.

I DO NOT WISH TO BELIEVE ANYTHING UNSCIEN-TIFIC.

IT APPEARED AT THE SAME TIME AS HER SUICIDE ATTEMPT.

I SUPPOSE YOU CAN ACCEPT THE LOVE OF ALL HUMANITY?

NO, YOU COULD NEVER UNDER-STAND. YOU AND YOUR LOVE...

YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU? HOW DISGUSTING IT IS FOR AN UNDESIRED PARTNER TO COME CLOSE, BE SWEET TO YOU, CARESS YOU IN THE MOST LEWD WAYS...

FATHER, I SUPPOSE YOU WOULD REPROACH ME. BUT A THING THAT IS HATEFUL IS SIMPLY HATEFUL!

I *DO* UNDER-STAND.

N-NO ...

AND I TOO BECAME SUCH A TARGET ONCE.

IN MY NATIVE LAND, MEN OF THE CLOTH OCCASIONALLY BECOME TARGETS FOR LOVE.

I'VE ALSO HAD THIS EXPERI-ENCE.

I UNDER-STAND, PROFES-SOR KIRIDA.

SHE LIVED IN CONSTANT FEAR OF ABANDONMENT.

IT WAS A SERIOUS WOMAN WHO DEVOTEDLY ATTENDED CHURCH REGULARLY. SHE SOUGHT ABSTINENCE. BUT IN TRUTH, A POWERFUL DEPENDENCE CONTROLLED HER SPIRIT.

AND HER FEELINGS CAME TO BE SOMETHING IMMORAL.

...BUT SHE WOULD NOT HEAR A WORD OF IT.

I LECTURED HER ON SELF-RELIANCE AND LOVE OF MAN...

HER FAITH EVENTU-ALLY DEVEL-OPED INTO A STRONG DEPEN-DENCE ON ME.

OF COURSE, FROM THE POSITION OF PASTOR...

BUT NOW I FEEL THAT I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE COMPASSIONATE WITH HER. I REGRET IT.

IT'S UNCOM-FORTABLE TO REMEMBER IT.

SHE BEGAN TO AMBUSH ME AFTER EVENING PRAYERS.

SHE DID WHATEVER SHE COULD TO ATTRACT MY ATTENTION. YES, WHATEVER SHE COULD...

LOVE! HA HA HA!

PLEASE DO NOT MAKE ME LAUGH, SIR!

YOU SAY I SHOULD SHOW COMPASSION?! HOW?! SHOULD I HAVE ACCEPTED HAYAMA'S LOVE, LOVED HER BACK?!

PROFESSOR KIRIDA, IT'S THE SAME FOR YOU, WITH A POSITION SUCH AS YOURS.

NGH NGH NGH NGH NGH

AAAAH!

SHF SHF

HAAA

FWOOO

STOOOOP!

STOP IT.

STOP.

NGH! NGH!

AAAAH!

HERE... INDEED... THERE'S SOMETHING HERE...

SOME-THING IS TOUCHING THE PRO-FESSOR...

OHHHH!

OHHHH!

EEEEEEEEEE!

AAAAAH!

AAAAAAAH!!

OHHHHHHHH!!

I WANT YOUUUUUU!

I LOVE YOUUUUUU!

I'M THE ONLY ONE FOR YOU!!

ME ALONE!!

PLEASE LOVE ONLY ME!!

LOVE ME ALONE !!

AAAAAAH!!

PLEASE, MAKE ME HAPPY!!

ONLY ME!!

PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME!!

ONLY ME!!

HNNNGH.

UNH!

PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME!!

AAAAAAAH!!

FATHER MURCHISON!

PROFES-
SOR!

OH! I'M SO SORRY, FATHER MURCHISON. I WAS TRYING TO MAKE YOU JEALOUS. PLEASE FORGIVE ME.

I'M SORRY. FORGIVE ME.

BUT IT'S YOUR FAULT FOR HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH THAT JAPANESE GIRL.

YOU WERE IN THE WRONG.

...MAYBE ONLY THE PARROT COULD SEE THE PASSION OF THE FURIOUS WOMAN.

IF THIS STORY IS TRUE...

THE PRIEST LEFT THIS WORLD WITHOUT TELLING ANYONE ELSE ABOUT ENGAI KIRIDA'S DEATH.

AFTER SHE REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, SUMIKO HAYAMA WROTE THE STORY FATHER MURCHISON TOLD HER IN HER JOURNAL.

FWOO

...I FELT A HOT BREATH JUST NOW...

I... I'M SURE...

AH ?!

THE ENIGMA OF AMIGARA FAULT
HARVEST

NOT TOO LONG AGO, THERE WAS A GREAT EARTHQUAKE IN H PREFECTURE.

SEVERAL TOWNS AND VILLAGES WERE DEVASTATED.

THE FAULT WAS DEEP AND SEVERAL KILO-METERS LONG.

FOLLOWING THE EARTHQUAKE, A LARGE FAULT WAS DISCOVERED NEAR THE EPICENTER...

...THE BEGINNING OF THIS STRANGE INCIDENT.

THIS SIG-NALED ...

...ON THE NORTH SLOPE OF THE AMIGARA MOUNTAIN.

BUT I STILL HAVEN'T SEEN ANY-THING ...

AM I STILL ON AMIGARA MOUNTAIN? I'VE BEEN CLIMBING FOR A WHILE...

HMM ...

HEY! HELLO OVER THERE!

I THOUGHT THAT MUST BE WHY YOU CAME HERE — I MEAN NO OFFENSE — A WOMAN HIKER, ALL ALONE.

SO ARE YOU LOOKING FOR THE FAULT, TOO?

I'M YOSHIDA.

I'M OWAKI... WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

REALLY? IT WAS THE SAME WITH ME.

IT'S A REAL MYSTERY, ISN'T IT?

I SAW IT ALL ON TV. IT KIND OF MADE ME RESTLESS...

...WHEN I SAW IT I KNEW I HAD TO GO.

DID YOU HEAR VOICES?

HM?

IT'S GOT THE ENTIRE COUNTRY— NO THE ENTIRE WORLD, TRANSFIXED.

IT'S A WONDER OF NATURE...

MUTTER

MUTTER

IT MUST BE THE OTHERS WHO'VE COME HERE.

LET'S HEAD THAT WAY! I'M SURE WE'RE NEAR THE FAULT.

!

HAAH HAAH...

IT'S JUST LIKE HOW IT WAS ON TV...

...BUT A LOT MORE POWERFUL.

IT MAKES YOU WONDER, HOW COULD IT HAPPEN...

SO BEFORE THE QUAKE, THEY WERE UNDER-GROUND.

THOUSANDS OF HUMAN-SHAPED HOLES...

THEY'RE CHECKING OUT THE HOLES.

LOOK AT THAT... MAYBE THEY'RE UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS.

...FOUND IN THE FAULT EXPOSED BY THE EARTHQUAKE.

IN ANY CASE ...

HMM...IT SEEMS TO CURVE OFF INSIDE THE MOUNTAIN.

HOW DEEP DO YOU THINK IT GOES, PROFES-SOR?

EVEN THIS 30-METER FIBER SCOPE CAN'T FIND THE END.

BUT HOW COULD YOU DIG THIS SHAPE OUT OF SUCH SOLID ROCK?

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE THAT THIS COULD BE A NATURAL FORMATION.

SOMEONE MUST HAVE DUG THEM OUT FROM INSIDE.

I THINK THE ENTRANCE WAS SEALED UP WITH THE ACCUMULA-TION OF SOIL OVER THE YEARS...

...THE SAME FORCES THAT COVERED UP THESE HOLES.

BESIDES, WOULDN'T THERE BE A TRACE OF AN ENTRANCE OF SOME KIND?

NO ONE'S FOUND ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

THEN THESE HOLES MUST BE ANCIENT. BUT IF THAT'S THE CASE, WHO HAD THE TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE THEM?

CAREFUL, YOSHIDA.

IT'S STEEP.

AND WHAT PURPOSE DID THEY SERVE ...?

GLANCE

GLANCE

...

HARVES

WHAT'D YOU SEE?

WHAT ...

I SAW IT ON TV.

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOME-THING.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

SO I CAME HERE TO MAKE SURE ABOUT IT.

I ONLY CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF IT ON TV.

I KNOW I SAW IT... ONE OF THESE HOLES.

I...I SAW IT ON TV.

... WAS MY SHAPE.

IT...

SO WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT THIS HOLE?

BUT NOW THAT I'M HERE, THERE ARE SO MANY HOLES I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE IT IS...

IT WAS *BASED* ON ME. I SWEAR, I'M SERIOUS!

...THAT HOLE WAS MY SILHOUETTE!

IT WAS IDENTICAL... NO, IT WENT BEYOND THAT...

WHAT?

HOW COULD THEY HAVE BASED IT ON YOU? THAT'S KIND OF EGOTISTICAL, DON'T YOU THINK?

THESE HOLES ARE SUPPOSED TO BE THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD.

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

SO, YOU TOO...

I KNEW IT WAS ME. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO MAKE SENSE!

I'M NOT JOKING! DON'T MAKE FUN OF ME!

MY NAME'S NAKAGAKI.

AND YOU'RE...

...I CAME HERE TO LOOK FOR MY HOLE.

I FELT THE SAME WAY. AFTER I SAW IT ON TV...

...I FINALLY FOUND MINE.

AND ...

WE'RE ALL LOOKING FOR OUR HOLES.

IT'S AN UNBELIEVABLE PHENOMENON. MOST OF US CAME HERE FOR THE EXACT SAME REASON.

HMM? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME.

...SEE HOW PER-FECTLY I FIT?

THIS IS IT...

WELL, I DON'T BLAME YOU.

SHF

SHF

I'LL PROVE THIS IS MY HOLE RIGHT NOW.

JUST WATCH ME!

HEY... WHAT?!

HEY ...

SSL

SLIP

OH MY GOD! HEY! COME BACK!

HEY!

THAT'S DANGER-OUS!!

HEY, COME BACK HERE!!

...

MUTTER MUTTER

I DON'T KNOW IF HE CAN GET OUT!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. THIS GUY JUST WENT INTO THE HOLE!

HMM...HE MUST BE FARTHER DOWN...

...BUT THERE'S NO TRACE OF HIM WITHIN 30 METERS!!

PROFESSOR, WE'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR HIM WITH THE FIBER SCOPE...

A CROWD GATHERED AROUND THE HOLE, SHOUTING, BUT NAKAGAKI DID NOT COME OUT.

LET'S CALL IN THE RESCUE SQUAD!!

THIS IS AN EMER-GENCY!

WE HAVE TO DO SOME-THING!

ONE OF THEIR MEMBERS, 5'2" TALL, IS TRYING TO GO IN...

A RESCUE SQUAD IS ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE HOLE.

OVER THREE HOURS HAVE ELAPSED SINCE HIS DISAPPEAR-ANCE.

WE NOW HAVE THIS UPDATE ON THE MAN WHO DISAPPEARED INTO ONE OF THE MYSTERIOUS HOLES...

HE MUST HAVE BEEN CRAZY TO GO IN THERE!

THE RESCUE SQUAD MEMBER HAD TO RETREAT AFTER GOING NO MORE THAN FIVE METERS INTO THE HOLE...

NIGHT HAS FALLEN AND THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE MAN WHO WENT INTO THE HOLE.

I WAS COM-PLETELY TRAPPED IN PITCH BLACK-NESS, HUNDREDS OF METERS INTO THE HOLE.

IN MY DREAM, I WAS NAKAGAKI.

THAT NIGHT I HAD A NIGHTMARE.

THE EARTHQUAKE. THE HOLE MUST HAVE BEEN DEFORMED BY THE EARTHQUAKE. SO I CAN'T MOVE...

I-I CAN'T MOVE...

I'M STUCK ...

AGGH... GGH...

ANY-ONE! HELP ME!

S-SOMEONE!

...IT'S MORNING... IT WAS A NIGHTMARE ...

HAAH HAAH ...

AAGGH!

I'LL GO FIND OUT...

OR MAYBE HE GOT RESCUED...

IS HE STILL DOWN THERE, WRITHING NAKED IN THAT HOLE?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO NAKAGAKI ?

YOU'RE UP ALREADY?

HE'S STILL GONE.

...

I FOUND MY HOLE.

I FOUND IT.

WHAT IS IT?

I NEED TO SHOW YOU SOME-THING.

NEVER MIND... OWAKI, CAN YOU COME WITH ME?

HARVEST

NO WONDER I COULDN'T FIND IT.

IT TURNED OUT IT WAS FARTHER DOWN AT THE FOOT OF THE FAULT.

WELL, IT DOES LOOK KIND OF LIKE YOU...

IT'S IDEN-TICAL TO ME.

THIS IS IT...

WHY ARE YOU SHAKING?

YOSHIDA, WHAT IS IT?

HARVEST

THIS IS MY TUNNEL... THEY DUG IT FOR ME...

I'M SCARED... I'M SO SCARED...

THIS IS MY TUNNEL!

NO ...

IT JUST HAPPENS TO LOOK A LITTLE LIKE YOU!

IT'S JUST A COINCI-DENCE !!

...I'LL BE TRAPPED IN THIS HOLE!

AND WHEN I GO IN...

IT'S BEEN WAITING FOR ME TO ENTER, ALL THAT TIME WHEN IT WAS UNDER-GROUND!

IT WAS MADE... MADE FOR ME TO ENTER!

HEY ...

...DISAP-PEARED. HE HAS VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE.

IT HAS BEEN A FULL DAY SINCE THE MAN WHO WALKED INTO THE HOLE...

HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! GET DOWN HERE BEFORE YOU HURT YOURSELF!!

WHAT'S THAT KID DOING?

LOOK OVER THERE!

IT WAS MADE FOR ME!

TH-THIS IS MY HOLE!

H-HEY!!

GOOD-BYE!

I HAVE TO GO IN!

...AND ENTER THE HOLES...!!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!! OTHERS MIGHT FOLLOW HIM NOW...

S-STOP!! SOMEBODY STOP HIM!

QUICK! GET THEM OUT!

HERE, TOO!!

LOOK OVER HERE!! SOMEONE ELSE JUST WENT IN!

OH, NO!!

I'M GOING TO DIE THERE, INSIDE THAT HOLE!

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO ENTER THAT HOLE.

YOSHIDA ?!

NO... NO! I'M SCARED !

YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT!

DON'T WORRY !

LOOK OVER THERE...

IT'S NO GOOD...

THAT'S WHAT IT'S SAYING.

"COME INTO ME."

MY SIL-HOUETTE'S SAYING, "COME IN."

IT'S JUST GAPING AT ME!!

JUST WATCH ME!!

I'LL FILL THIS HOLE UP!

GET AHOLD OF YOUR-SELF!

ARVE

OH GOD! OH GOD I'M SCARED!

I'LL HELP YOU.

ALL RIGHT, IF YOU'RE SO SCARED...

CLATTA

CLATTA

...

NOW YOU'RE SAFE.

THERE... SEE?

DON'T YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO YOUR TENT?

...MY PARENTS DIDN'T CARE ABOUT ME... NEITHER DID MY FRIENDS...

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ALONE... EVER SINCE I WAS A CHILD...

DON'T WORRY, I'M HERE WITH YOU.

I'M TOO SCARED TO BE ALONE.

NO...

REALLY ?

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, THOUGH, NOW THAT I'M WITH YOU.

NOTHING COULD BE LONELIER THAN THAT HOLE.

DO YOU SEE, YOSHIDA? YOU'RE AFRAID OF THAT HOLE BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN LONELY.

YES.

IT WAS ANOTHER TIME... I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG AGO.

I HAD COMMITTED A HORRIBLE CRIME, AND I WAS ABOUT TO BE PUNISHED.

SHNK

THAT NIGHT I HAD ANOTHER NIGHTMARE.

I WAS ABOUT TO ENTER THIS HOLE.

WHEN A PERSON COMMITTED A CRIME OF MY MAGNITUDE, THE PEOPLE IN THE PAST WOULD DIG HUMAN-SHAPED HOLES...

ALONG THE CLIFF WALL WERE COUNTLESS HOLES FOR CRIMINALS EXECUTED IN THE PAST.

ACTUALLY, IT WAS MORE LIKE A DEATH SENTENCE.

HWOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

...I WAS SLIDING SLOWLY, SLOWLY DOWN... MOVING FORWARD WITH EACH MOVEMENT I MADE.

THE WALLS WERE CARVED IN A WAY THAT KEPT YOU FROM RETREAT-ING...

I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO MOVE FORWARD, INTO THE CLAUSTRO-PHOBIA ALL AROUND.

I FELT THE COLD STONE ON ALL SIDES AROUND ME.

...STRETCHING IT UNTIL IT SHOULD HAVE TORN OFF.

UNHH... UNHH ...!!

TO MY HORROR, THE PART CORRE-SPONDING TO MY NECK ONLY GOT LONGER AND LONGER...

URR...

I FELT A TUG ON MY NECK.

AND WITH TIME ...

GYAAGHH!

SOME-ONE! ANY-ONE! HELP ME!

THE HOLE STRETCHED OUT INTO SEVERAL DIRECTIONS AT ONCE...!

NO...NOT JUST MY NECK... MY ARMS, LEGS AND TORSO...

HUH?!

ANOTHER NIGHT-MARE...

GASP... GASP...

AAAGH!

WHERE DID SHE GO?

N- NO...

HARVEST

SHE CAN'T HAVE GONE FAR IN THE DARK.

SHE TOOK THEM OUT!

SHE WENT IN THE HOLE!!

AH ...?!

THE ROCKS ...

...

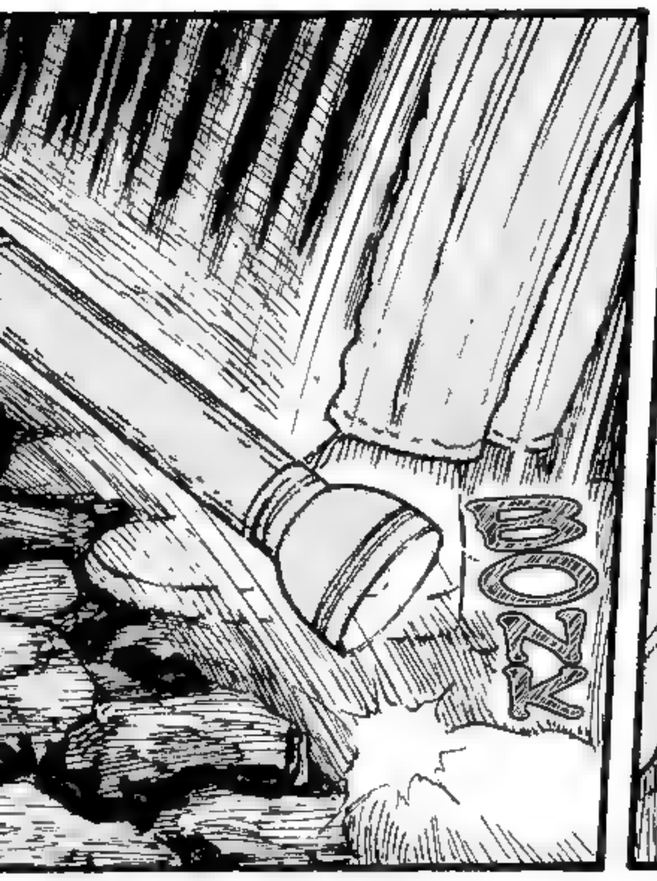
COME BACK!!

HEY YOSHIDA !

WHY'D YOU DO IT?!

DAMMIT ...WHY...

WHY ...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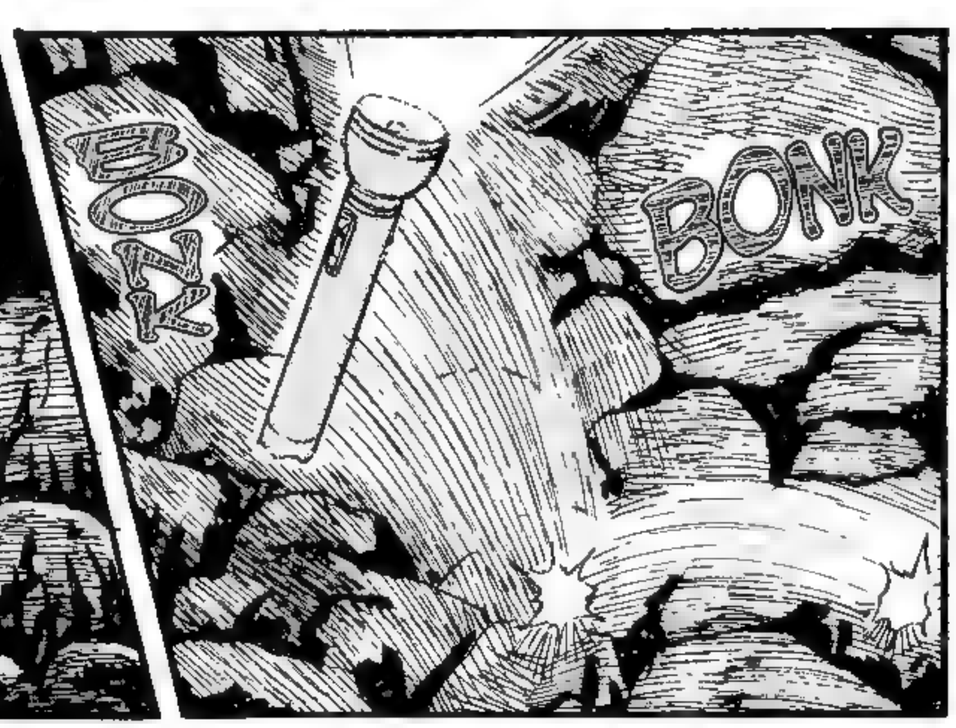
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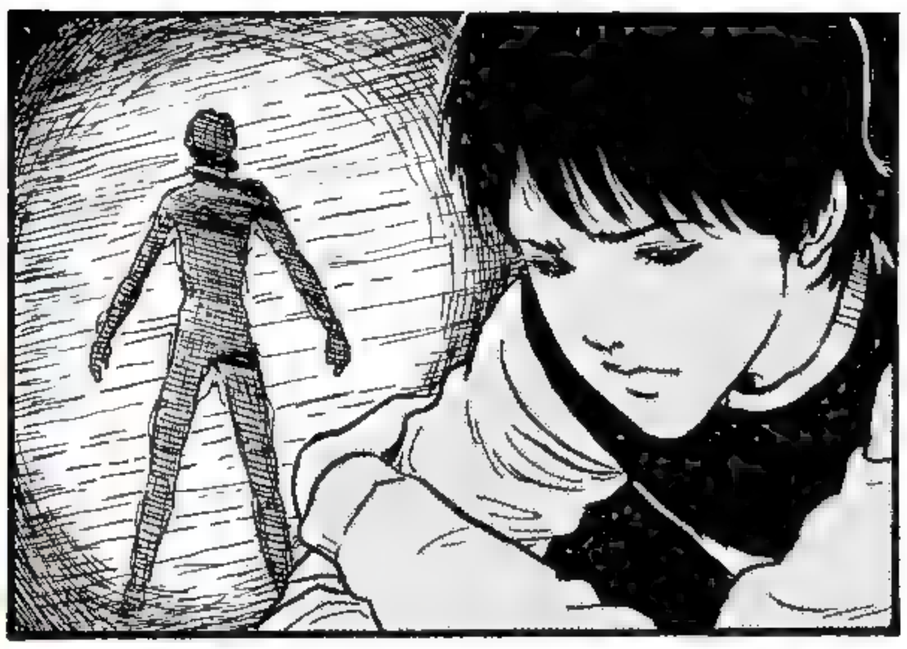
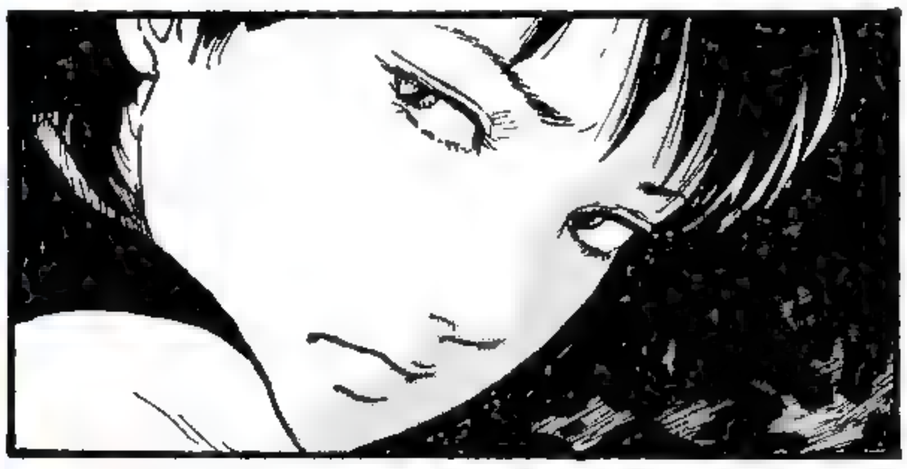




THIS IS MY HOLE...

...

THIS IS...

TH...

JUST AS THAT CLIMBER INFORMED US.

SO THERE WAS A FAULT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN!!

PROFES-SOR... HERE IT IS!

SEVERAL MONTHS LATER...

THEY DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY FORM...

THERE ARE HOLES, BUT THEY'RE NOT HUMAN SHAPED...

BUT UNLIKE THE ONE ON THE OTHER SIDE, THIS ONE'S QUITE SMALL.

HMM... I'M SURE THIS WAS FORMED BY THE EARTH-QUAKE AS WELL.

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS!

AHA!

UHH...

...

YAAAHH!

I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOK.

I WONDER IF THEY'RE CONNECTED TO THE ONES OVER THERE.

I-I SEE SOME-THING!!

S-SIR!!

IT'S SLOWLY COMING THIS WAY!!

DRR...DRR...DRR...

THE SAD TALE OF THE PRINCIPAL POST

FUNNY, HE WAS HERE JUST A MOMENT AGO...

WHERE'S THE MAN OF THE HOUSE, ANYWAY?

SOME-ONE HELP ME!

H-H-HELP!

THAT SOUNDS LIKE DAD!

IT'S SO NICE. I'M REALLY JEALOUS!

SO YOU FINALLY FINISHED YOUR NEW HOUSE! THANKS FOR INVITING US OVER!

MORE SAKE, ANY-ONE?

I'M DOWN HERE!

I'M IN THE CRAWL SPACE! HELP ME...

HUH?

WHAT IS IT? WHERE ARE YOU?!

HUH?

DEAR?

DEAR, WHERE ARE YOU?!

WHERE'VE YOU GOTTEN TO?

LET'S GO HELP HIM!

SOME-THING HAPPENED TO DAD IN THE CRAWL SPACE.

AH!

NGH ...

LOOKS LIKE I'M BEING CRUSHED BY THE POST...

D-DEAR... WHAT IN THE WORLD HAPPENED ?!

N-NO... WAIT...

THIS IS TERRIBLE... I'LL CALL THE CARPENTER!!

NGH... IT'S A LONG STORY...

B-BUT HOW?! HOW DID YOU GET UNDER THERE? THE WEIGHT OF THE WHOLE HOUSE IS ON TOP OF YOU!

THEN... WHAT ARE YOU SAYING WE SHOULD DO?!

IF YOU MOVE IT JUST TO RESCUE ME, THE ENTIRE HOUSE MIGHT FALL OVER.

TH-THIS LOOKS LIKE THE PRINCIPAL POST...

I MEAN, WHAT A SHAME! OUR BRAND-NEW HOUSE !

AS HIS WIFE, DAUGHTER AND FRIENDS WATCHED OVER HIM, HE PASSED AWAY LATER THAT EVENING.

I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE IT. I'LL DIE SUPPORTING THIS HOUSE.

W-WHAT?!

LEAVE ME HERE...

DEAR ...

DADDY, NO!

...AND NOW NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW HOW HE ENDED UP GETTING UNDERNEATH IT.

HE STILL REMAINS UNDER THE PRINCIPAL POST...

KEEPSAKE

NAH, TRUTH IS... MAYBE IT WAS JUST IN MY HEAD.

BUT IT SOUNDED LIKE IT WAS COMING FROM INSIDE THE BURIAL MOUND. THE ISHIKAWAS' TOMB...

WHAT? AN ABANDONED BABY?

AND I HEARD A BABY CRYING SOMEWHERE.

HEY! I WAS OUT AT THE GRAVEYARD THERE.

WAAAAAH

WAAAAAH

WAAAAAH

TH-THE MADAME'S GRAVE...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, TOMEKICHI ?

CHATTER

CHATTER

MY LORD! IT'S TERRIBLE!!

WAAAH

HAAAH

KEEPSAKE

BEEN ABOUT NINE MONTHS SINCE THE MADAME PASSED. QUITE SOMETHING HOW IT GREW IN THE BELLY OF HER CORPSE.

NOW THIS IS A SURPRISE... I'VE HEARD TALK OF THINGS LIKE THIS, BUT IT REALLY DOES HAPPEN.

THIS WOULD BE YOUR CHILD THEN?

YOUNG SIR.

WAAA

IMPOS-
SIBLE...

IM—

SEE? THE CORD'S STILL ATTACHED.

NO, THIS CHILD IS LEGITIMATE.

THEY ONLY JUST HAD A BABY OF THEIR OWN.

BUT WAIT A SECOND. THE YOUNG MASTER TOOK HIS MISTRESS AS HIS NEW WIFE.

IS THIS REALLY A HAPPY EVENT THEN, I WONDER?

THAT'S RIGHT. A KEEPSAKE FROM YOUR LATE WIFE.

AT ANY RATE, IT'S TO BE CELE-BRATED, SIR...

WAAAH

WAAAH

APPEARANCES WENT OUT THE WINDOW WHEN TOYOJI TOOK HIS MISTRESS AS HIS WIFE.

BUT IT IS INDEED TOYOJI'S CHILD. WE MUST RAISE IT FOR APPEARANCES, IF NOTHING ELSE.

OH, IT'S SO DISTURBING. A BABY BORN OF A DEAD WOMAN...

WAAH

WAAH

I BARELY HAVE ENOUGH MILK FOR SHINNOSUKE!

WHAT ON EARTH DO YOU WANT? I'M NOT RAISING THAT CHILD!

I'LL HAVE THE MAID O-TANE TAKE CARE OF HIM.

WELL, I'LL GET A NURSE FOR THE CHILD. YOU NEEDN'T WORRY, O-MITSU.

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.

NURSING THE BABY OF YOUR FIRST WIFE— AND BORN OF A CORPSE!

OBVIOUSLY, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY MILK, SO GIVE IT WATER FROM THE RICE WASHING OR GOAT'S MILK.

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF THE BABY, O-TANE.

MANJURO'S GOOD, I SUPPOSE.

HIS NAME? RIGHT...

AND WHAT'S THE CHILD'S NAME?

YES... SIR.

MAN-JURO.

OH, THERE, THERE.

GAH

GAH

GAH

GOO GOO

SO THEN WHY...?

BUT THE DEAD O-SUZU COULDN'T HAVE CHILDREN TO START WITH.

GAH GAH

GOO GOO

ISN'T YOUR MISTRESS IN THE FAMILY WAY?

DARLING.

THE PREVIOUS YEAR...

DO YOU INTEND TO MAKE THE CHILD YOUR HEIR?

YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE JUST BECAUSE I CAN'T HAVE CHILDREN.

W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, O-SUZU?

I KNOW EVERY-THING.

O-SUZU, HOW DO YOU...?

I'M SAYING IT'S A GOOD IDEA.

I'M NOT SAYING THIS OUT OF SPITE.

O-SUZU... WILL YOU STOP ALREADY?

IT'S FINE. YOU SHOULD.

O-SUZU ...

I HAVE THAT MUCH RIGHT AT LEAST.

THE BABY THAT CONCUBINE BEARS WILL BE *OUR* CHILD.

TOYOJI... YOU COULDN'T ACTUALLY HAVE SAID YES?

NO. THIS CHILD IS MINE.

...THAT'S WHAT SHE SAID. WHAT DO YOU THINK, O-MITSU?

I COULDN'T UPSET YOU LIKE THAT.

HOW COULD I?

YOU BELONG ONLY TO ME.

AAH, TOYOJI... I LOVE YOU. I LOVE YOU.

TOYOJI?

... WHAT IS IT?

...YOUR WIFE.

KILL...

HEY.

SHF

FWP

SO? YOU'D DO IT IF YOU LOVED ME.

AND NO ONE CAN TELL THAT IT WAS POISON.

HE SAYS WHEN YOU ADMINISTER THIS POISON, THE PERSON GETS WEAKER AND WEAKER AND THEN DIES.

I KNOW SOMEONE WITH A POISON IMPORTED FROM EUROPE.

THUD

AH! MADAME!!

Y- YES...

I JUST TIRE SO EASILY OF LATE.

MADAME? ARE YOU FEELING POORLY?

A MONTH LATER ...

JUST AS O-MITSU SAID, NO ONE REALIZED SHE'D BEEN POISONED.

AND THEN A MONTH LATER— EXACTLY NINE MONTHS AGO, O-SUZU DIED.

...AND YET SHE HAD A CHILD AFTER SHE DIED. IT'S BIZARRE.

BUT...SHE COULDN'T BEAR CHILDREN...

YAAAH!

THREE YEARS LATER ...

AH! MANJURO'S LOOKING AT US!!

AAAH!
CREEPYYYY!
RUUUUUUUN
!!

MANJURO'S SCARING MEEEEE!!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, SHINNO-SUKE?

WAAAAH! MOMMY!

SHOO! SHOO!

MANJURO... YOU GO OVER THERE!!

I'LL UNTIE YOU RIGHT NOW.

OH, YOU POOR DEAR. THE MADAME TIED YOU UP AGAIN, HM?

MANJURO! WHAT HAPPENED ?!

AH!

O-TANE!

YOU'RE NOT DISCIPLINING HIM PROPERLY.

IT'S BECAUSE OF MANJURO THAT SHINNOSUKE'S SO TIMID.

I-I'M TERRIBLY SORRY.

WHO SAID YOU COULD UNTIE HIM?!

MADAME, I BEG YOUR FORGIVENESS...

COME!! I'LL DISCIPLINE YOU FIRST!

AH!

AAH, DISGUSTING! IF MY FATHER-IN-LAW DIDN'T GO ON AND ON ABOUT APPEARANCES, I WOULD HAVE CHASED YOU TWO OUT A LONG TIME AGO!!

SPLASH

HE WAS BORN FROM A CORPSE!!

SLAP

EEE !!

HIS VERY EXISTENCE IS HARMFUL!

MANJURO DOESN'T MEAN ANY HARM.

MADAME, I BEG YOU...

MADAME! I BEG YOU!

EEAH! OW!!

...HAVE A CHILD WITH YOUR WIFE WHEN SHE WAS DYING!

THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT. TO THINK YOU WOULD TRY TO...

KLATTER

HEY, O-MITSU ...

THAT'S ENOUGH ALREADY...

YOU'RE STILL DOING THIS?

HEH ... HEH ...

HEH HEH HEH!

HEH ...

HEH ...

HEH ...

SHE WASN'T DYING.

HEH! IT'S JUST...

W- WHAT'S SO FUNNY, O-TANE?!

HEH HEH HEH HEH!

THE MASTER WENT TO THE FORMER MADAME'S DEAD BODY.

BUT I SAW HIM. THE NIGHT OF THE WAKE...

WHAT ?!

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF THEY'D MADE THE CHILD WHILE SHE WAS ALIVE.

W—

WHAT ?!

A NURSE'S INTUITION.

MANJURO IS THE PRODUCT OF THAT COUPLING. I KNOW IT.

...

IS THIS TRUE?!

Y- YOU...

BEFORE I KNEW IT, O-SUZU WAS LOOKING AT ME.

...I WAS ALONE IN THE ALTAR ROOM.

THE NIGHT OF THE WAKE ...

I-I HAD NO CHOICE...

SHE ASKED ME TO...

I... WANT A BABY...

DARLING ... COME TO ME...

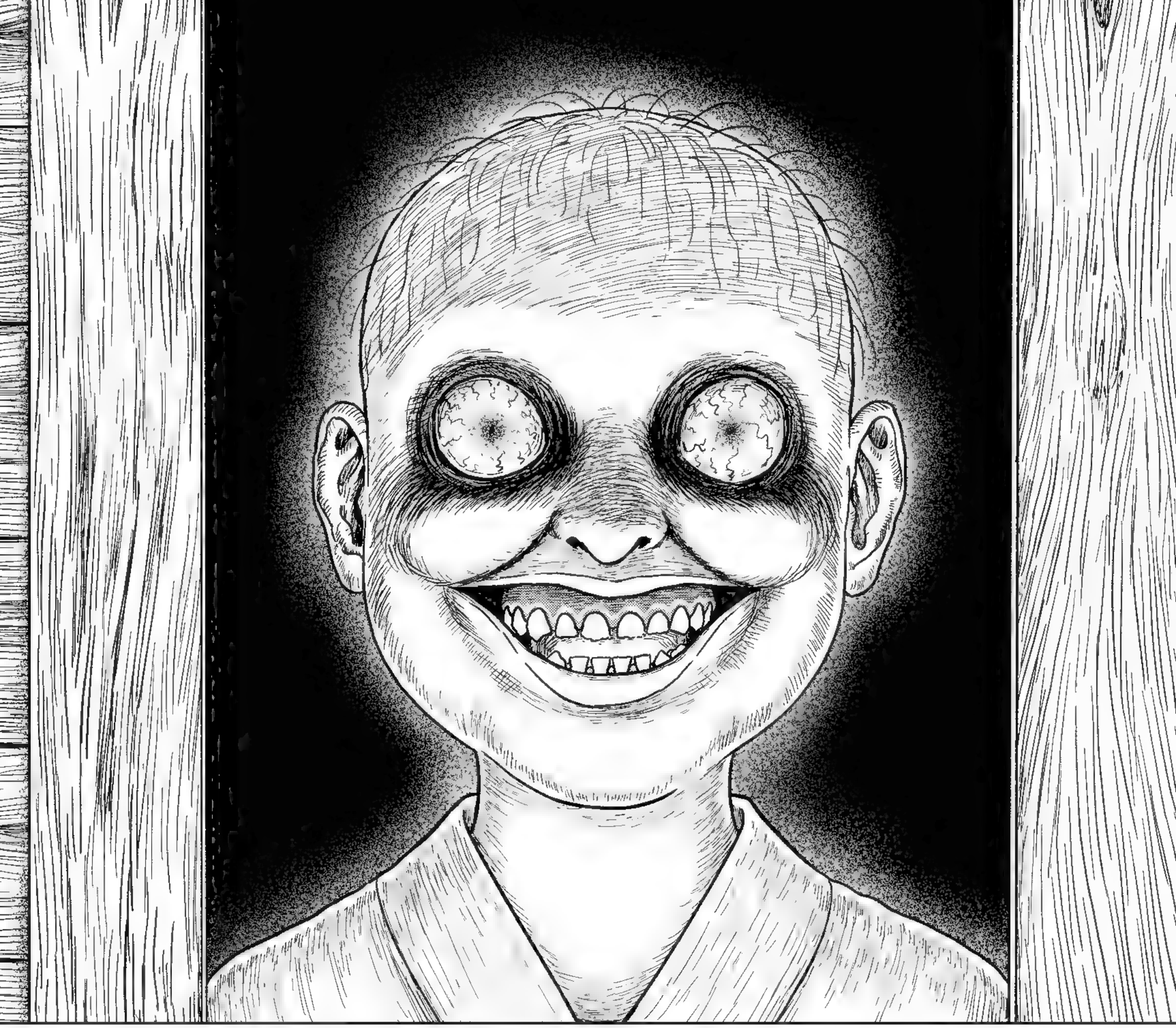
HOW FILTHY !!

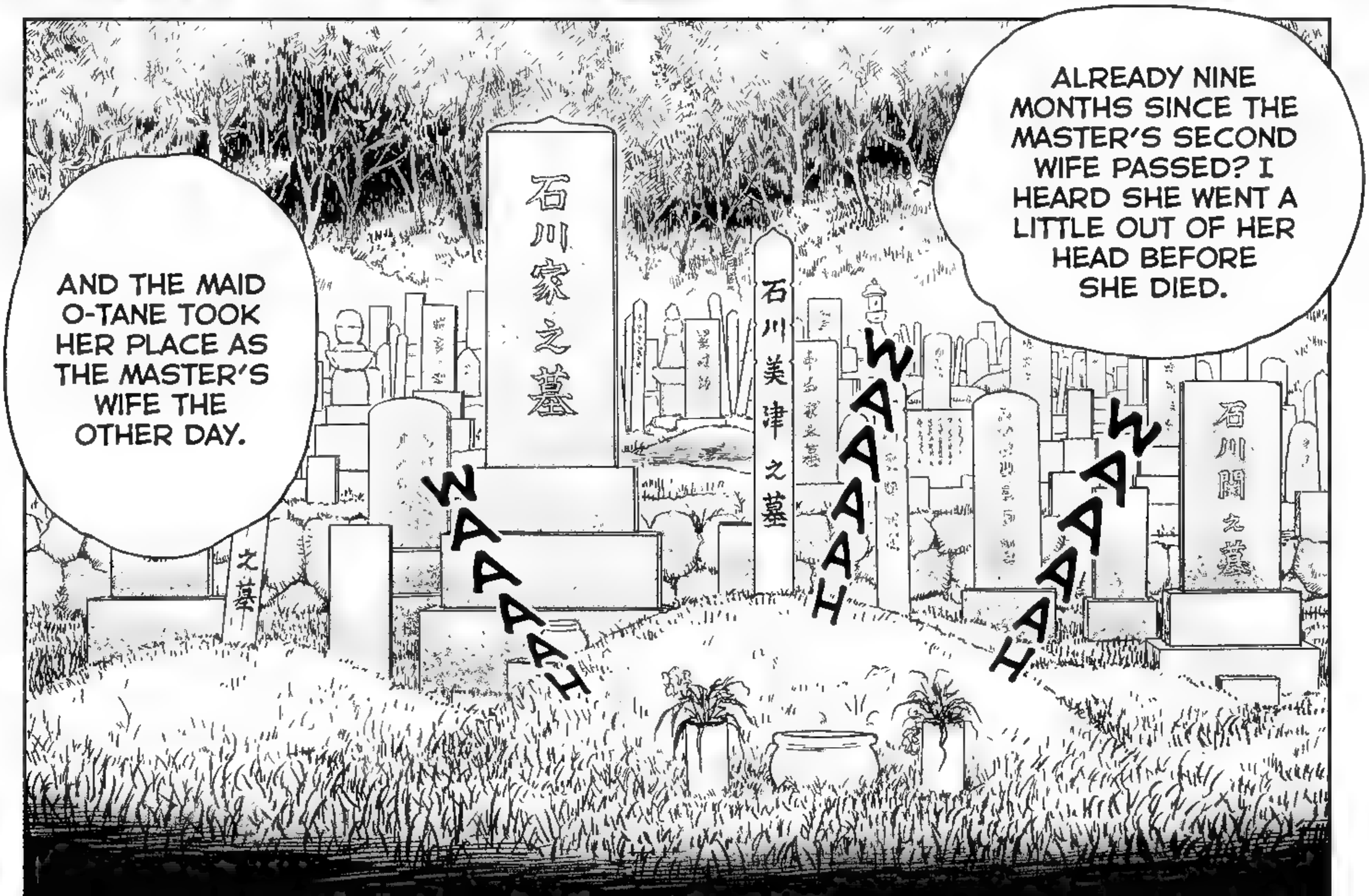
YOU—

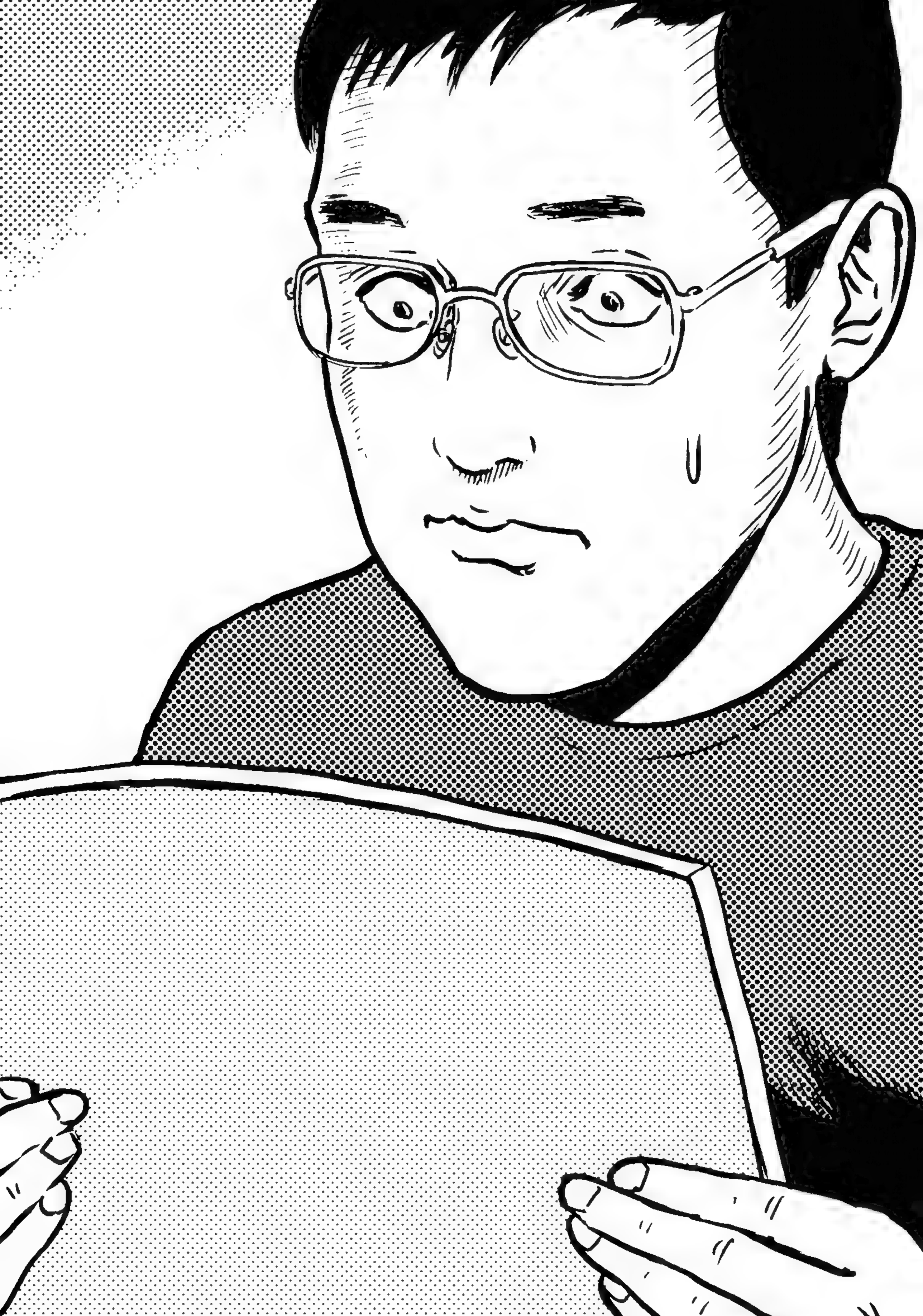
I... SHE JUST ASKED ME TO.

EEEE !!

AH!




AND THE MAID O-TANE TOOK HER PLACE AS THE MASTER'S WIFE THE OTHER DAY.
ALREADY NINE MONTHS SINCE THE MASTER'S SECOND WIFE PASSED? I HEARD SHE WENT A LITTLE OUT OF HER HEAD BEFORE SHE DIED.
石川家之墓
石川美津之墓
石川開之墓
之墓
WAAAH
HAAAA
HAAAA



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Junji Ito made his professional manga debut in 1987 and since then has gone on to be recognized as one of the greatest contemporary artists working in the horror genre. His titles include *Tomie* and *Uzumaki*, which have been adapted into live-action films; *Gyo*, which was adapted into an animated film; and his short story collections *Fragments of Horror*, *Frankenstein*, *Shiver* and *Smashed*, all of which are available from VIZ Media.

Ito's influences include classic horror manga artists Kazuo Umezz and Hideshi Hino, as well as authors Yasutaka Tsutsui and H.P. Lovecraft. His collection *Frankenstein* won the 2019 Eisner Award in the "Best Adaptation from Another Medium" category and his latest long-form manga, *No Longer Human*, has received critical acclaim.

VENUS IN THE BLIND SPOT

Story & Art by Junji Ito

ITO JUNJI TANPENSHU BEST OF BEST
by Junji ITO

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279.

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280.

Uzumaki

281.

No Longer Human vol. 1 cover

282.

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283.

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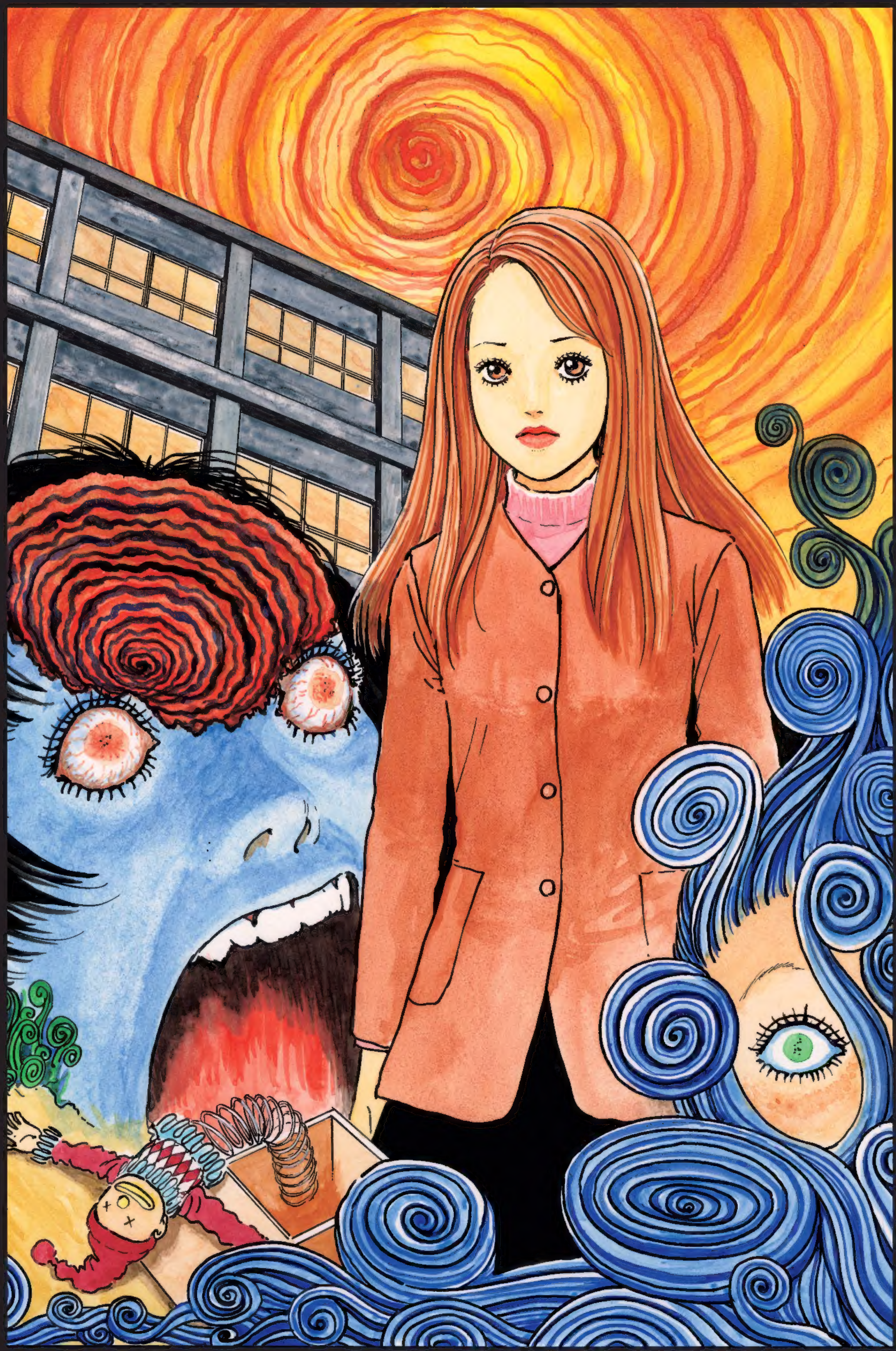
Frankenstein
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Innsmouth